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DRAMA

VOL. 10

FEBRUARY MCMXXXII

NUMBER 5

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

By C. B. Purdom

NINETEEN thirty-one will be remembered as the year in which the theatre in London set out to beat the cinema. It did so by playing the cinema's own game—that is by giving the public crowds, spectacle, and swift action.

"White Horse Inn," "Vienna Waltzes," "The Good Companions," "Cavalcade," "Grand Hotel," "Elizabeth of England," "Bow Bells," and even Max Reinhardt's "Helen" owe almost everything to this effort to rival the extravagance of the cinema and to capture its audience. The result is that the stage has shown that it can do at least as well as the film.

I would not deny that the effort has been worth the making; for it has displayed the resources of the theatre in a way that has impressed the public. But I doubt if it has brought much of value to the stage. It could not be expected to do so. The theatre has its own place, and to keep it it does not need to rival any other form of entertainment but has just to do the hard task of getting those who work in it to put all their energy and intelligence into doing their own job. None of the plays I have mentioned has any real merit as a play—they are neither good to read nor do they offer any but limited opportunities for acting. "Bow Bells," which is a revue, made a sensation by having to be postponed at the last moment because its new stage machinery got jammed. The object of machinery was to make the changes required for setting the numerous scenes without dropping the curtain or holding up the show. The machinery consisted of a moving section in the floor of the stage, which enabled actors and properties to be brought on and taken off

—not of much utility I think—and narrow metal flats joined together on rollers for use in place of curtains. There were two artistes of genius in the production, Nelson Keys and Binnie Hale, but they were not allowed to compete with the machinery.

This pre-occupation with the attempt to fight the cinema accounts no doubt for the low state of the theatre during the first months of the present year. In the forty-three theatres that are open on the day I am writing, there are no more than six with shows that I should have any confidence in recommending, and only three have plays that I really admire.

The Christmas shows, most of which are now coming to an end, had hardly anything fresh. There was "Peter Pan," of course, and half a dozen other hardy annuals. The only new thing was "Aladdin" at the Lyric, Hammersmith, which was clever enough, but seemed to me to invite its audience to be too easily amused. I preferred the old-fashioned pantomime, "Cinderella," at the Lyceum, because it had no pretensions. "The Red Rover's Revenge" at the Gate Theatre Studio pleased me too, for though it was a highly self-conscious adaption of the old melodrama, it was done with an exceeding good spirit. Mr. Peter Godfrey's theatre is one of the brightest spots in London's theatrical life.

"The Nelson Touch" at the St. Martins was the play I thought most of. This is a political play in which the men are excellent, well written parts superbly acted. The two parts for women are not well written. This play was done some months ago at the Embassy Theatre and has since been converted from farce to comedy. It is one of the best pieces on the London stage, and deserves to run.

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

I am sorry to hear that Mr. Alec Rea is giving up the Embassy, finding that the local audience is not large enough. This theatre seems to be in the wrong place; it has never done well. It looks as though Londoners will not go to any theatre that is not in the centre. Which seems strange, for travelling home late at night from the West End is one of the most frequently mentioned drawbacks to theatre going. I know any number of people who say they do not go for that reason. Neither will they go, one might retort, when the theatre is at their doors; but there is more in it than that. Theatres have to be in the right spot. The "Embassy" is not in the right place at Swiss Cottage any more than is the Everyman Theatre at Hampstead.

Dame Sybil Thorndike got a wonderful reception at the Old Vic, when she returned to play the Citizen's wife in "The Knight of the Burning Pestle." This is the sort of part that she does admirably, and though she didn't give us a Cockney she had the air of having walked straight in from the Waterloo Road. This old play keeps its vitality remarkably well. One wonders why. It must have had it to start with. How many revues of our time will be played three hundred years hence? Mr. Harcourt Williams's production translated something of the Jacobean manner into current style, and he got everything done in a brisk and lively way without dropping the curtain except for one interval. Mr. George Zucco played the Citizen in a magisterial manner, Mr. Ralph Richardson was a rather too gentlemanly Ralph, and Mr. Robert Speaight gave one of his delicate caricatures in which he took off perhaps rather more people than he intended.

The People's Theatre gave the "Merry Wives of Windsor" on traditional lines. I cannot imagine why it was considered worth while to do so. Its next production was Galsworthy's "Windows," which, being in the hands of Mr. Malcolm Morley, had more than a few merits. Mr. Morley knows how to place his actors. I don't know if he always gets his own way; but I find his productions alive and well thought out.

Forthcoming events to which I look forward are Mr. G. K. Chesterton's "Dr. Johnson," which at long last is to be produced. The Arts Theatre Club is to do it and I have an idea that this excellent play will be found on

the public stage before long. Herr Max Reinhardt's "Helen" is to come to London, and he is also going to give a new production of "The Miracle." And Mr. Gordon Craig is still in Paris, dreaming about the impossible theatre that might easily become possible if we wanted it hard enough.

A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT.

A NOVEL experiment was made by the London and Home County members of the British Drama League in the shape of a "Christmas Interlude," which took place at the Women's Service Hall, Westminster, on Wednesday, January 20th. The idea of this Interlude was to demonstrate various sides of the League's activities, and after an address of welcome had been given by Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth, Miss Mary Kelly gave an interesting talk on Village Drama. These events started at 4 o'clock, and were followed by a non-stop programme which continued until nearly 10.30. At 5 o'clock and 7.45 a "Costume Parade" was staged, showing, by the kind help of students from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and the Central School for Speech training and Dramatic Art, a selection of various costumes which can be hired from the V.D.S. Costume Bureau. At other times in the afternoon and evening respectively, speeches were delivered by Mr. Athole Stewart, Miss Elizabeth Blake (on "The need for Dramatic Education in the Dominions,"), and by Miss Gertrude Kingston (on "The Audience as seen from the Stage,").

Later in the evening a kind of "variety show" was staged—"Mosaic"—contributed by various members of the League. Conspicuous items in this were a playlet by Mr. A. J. Talbot, and a very lovely dance by Miss Diana Gould, of the Marie Rambert Ballet Club.

The only criticism which one heard was that the Hall was uncomfortably crowded, and this was undoubtedly true. For the rest, however, the Interlude was so successful that we hope it may be repeated next year, and the idea seems one which might well be taken up in other centres where the Drama League is strong and disposed to display the work and enthusiasm of its members for the edification of the public and the general development of the League.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VILLAGE DRAMA SOCIETY 1931—32

THIS year has seen the amalgamation of the Village Drama Society with the British Drama League; a move made, after careful consideration, in order to strengthen the work throughout the country by concentration of energy. Its advantages are already felt in the linking up of the various branches of activity, and will be still more felt as time goes on. Dr. Bottomley has already written on this subject in the October number of *Drama*, and it is needless to add more. The balance sheet of the Village Drama Society will be given in this number, closing on October 1st. It will be seen from this that the Village Drama Society came in with a balance of £473, of which the greater part forms a deposit account for the Costume Cupboard. The affiliation fees of 256 villages, at the 10/6 rate now come direct to the League, and the membership has gone up considerably since the amalgamation. It is also noticeable that many villages formerly paying this rate have changed to the guinea membership, and others have joined at that rate. The resignations of branches have been few at the end of this year, and our subscribers have responded nobly, (and as we cannot fail to know,) at a greater sacrifice to themselves, to the last collection of subscriptions.

COUNTY WORK.

Development of the Drama among the villages by the County bodies, Rural Community Councils, Federations of W.I. etc., and the sub-committees of the League has been very remarkable during the past year. By means of the Festivals, schools and classes organised by these, villages are emboldened to act who would never have done so otherwise, and they are helped to a knowledge of the elements of dramatic technique that sets them in the way to discover more for themselves. In England at least, the County Committee is a personal friend to the village bands, and can give the help and encouragement that means so much to them. In Scotland, the machinery is different, and the County matters less; the work is done more directly through the National

Festival of Community Drama, as organised by the Scottish Community Drama Association. The League is at present considering carefully the best method of helping and developing the work in the counties of England, in order that the individual villages may get the greatest possible benefit. Each of these Committees has held a Festival, and the results of such Festivals may be seen partly in the village reports; the players learn by these what they have no means of learning otherwise,—how to take criticism and how to criticise; the audiences too learn a very great deal of the same thing, and the general standard of thought about the drama is changing in a remarkable degree. They have the expert opinion of the adjudicator to set against the voice of the local journalist, who tells them that "Where every part was played to perfection, it is invidious to make distinction, and the utmost credit is due to everyone who took any part in this production." They are beginning to give a different meaning to the words "Our play was a great success," and to realise that achievement must be realised in terms of the spirit, and not in the amount of money dispensed to local charities. We wish all success to these local organisations. We hope too that they will help to link up individual villages to the League, so that each may get the advantage of experience that goes beyond their county, in the various ways in which it is offered them. The Village Drama Committee is glad to receive any criticisms on its work, and advice from those who feel that a useful piece of work may be done in some new direction;—we are not Olympians, we merely exist as a Committee to help the villages.

INDIVIDUAL BRANCHES

The reports from these show a growth that is most encouraging, from nearly all of them members have been to classes and schools of drama, and bands have entered for Competitions and Festivals.

The "West-end Success," or "Evening Dress Drama" appears less and less, and even our old bogey, "registry office drama," has not the appeal that it had. The proportion of players

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE VILLAGE DRAMA SOCIETY

to the population is interesting to note;—from the beginning we have preached the doctrine that a Village Drama Society should be an affair of the whole village;—societies which depend upon a small group of "People like Ourselves" are never likely to come really alive;—we don't want people like ourselves, but people unlike ourselves if we are to get any real view of life that is worth interpreting in the drama. Stowting gives an interesting account of a Greek play, which will perhaps set an example,—some villages are starting play-readings,—Bourton (Salop) sent in three bands to the Shropshire Festival from a population of 120—Fernhurst wants a producer, please! From several the cry goes up "How can we pay the fees necessary to do good modern drama in our tiny village halls?" There is everywhere a desire to do better plays, that will give the growing powers and imagination of the players something to work on. It seems hardly credible now to think that, when the V.D.S. was started in December, 1918, you might have counted on your fingers the number of villages in England in which the people of the village,—apart from the Squire's and Parson's families—had ever thought of acting.

The total number of branches in the Village Drama Section is now 490, but the number of villages that have shown themselves interested, in the drama in one way or another since the war is over 10,000.

COSTUME CUPBOARD

As all our members know, the Costume Cupboard is now run as a separate department, and remains at 274, New Cross Road, S.E.14. We have a very capable manager in Mrs. John Fernald, and we have to thank both her and the whole of our staff down there, who work with entire devotion, sparing themselves in no way, and often continuing for very long hours. Their work is one that needs the utmost care, and it is often made much harder by the treatment of the costumes by those who hire them; having lately gone through the whole stock, they have discovered that the actual depreciation of it caused by hirers who stain, tear, and even cut up costumes without permission is very great indeed; they are therefore obliged for the moment to revise prices a little. The autumn was, of course,

a serious time for the Cupboard, when such a number of bookings were cancelled owing to the election and to the unsettled state of the country. As it is run at a charity rate, it is not in a position to stand a long slump, and we hope that members will make use of it as much as possible, and so help to keep going a department that has been of inestimable value to poor players everywhere, and that will, moreover, when well supported, be a source of profit to the League.

N.P.—Gifts of costumes and material have been received from the following kind donors:—

Mrs. Lethbridge, Miss Kelly, Miss E. Wingfield, Mrs. Wavescook, Mr. Aregard, Mrs. Leche, Mr. Martock, Miss E. M. Irvine, Miss E. Whyte, Mrs. Timpson, Mrs. Whyte, Mrs. Vince, Miss J. Scrutton, Mrs. Geeke, Mrs. Catchpole, Mrs. Church, Mrs. Newman, Miss M. Macnamara, Miss Kirkley, Mrs. Wade-Cook, Miss Ella Carey, Miss M. Boldeiro, Miss Lethbridge, Miss Browne, Miss Medley Costin, The Hon. Mary Pakington, Miss Oules, Miss Gregory, and an unknown donor. We thank them all very heartily.

DRAMA SCHOOLS

The last School of the Village Drama Society was held at Cirencester from September 25th—October 5th, in conjunction with the Gloucestershire R.C.C. Mrs. Penelope Wheeler was the producer, and Dr. Bottomley, Mr. John Hampden and Mr. Angus Wilson also lectured at the School. Mr. Martin Browne conducted a section on Religious Drama, which proved of great value to the whole school. The students were all village producers or players, and an account of the School has already appeared in Drama.

ANNUAL MEETING

The last Annual Meeting of the V.D.S. was held by kind invitation of the Hon. Mary Pakington, at her house. The scheme of the amalgamation was discussed and passed, Mr. John Hampden spoke, and various members gave their experience in the work.

A vote of thanks was passed to Captain L. F. Ellis, D.S.O., C.B.E., M.C., of the National Council of Social Service, for his help in acting as Chairman of the conferences between the British Drama League and the Village Drama Society.

MARY KELLY.

EIGHTH VILLAGE PLAY-WRITING COMPETITION

Adjudicated by Mrs. Penelope Wheeler and Dr. Gordon Bottomley

IN this, the eighth annual Playwriting competition of the Village Drama Society, the adjudicators have had pleasure in noting that taking the various classes together—fewer helpless and impotent plays have been sent in than in any previous year; while, if the classes are considered in detail, this still holds good except with regard to that for one-act comedies. With regard to the Class for one-act romantic and poetic plays, this has been the weakling in all previous years— anxiously regarded because promoters and adjudicators alike have felt a paramount need for the development of this type of play, as of every type of imaginative fantasy: but this year the response in this class has been distinctly hopeful, and an increased number of entrants have faced its problems seriously.

There is, however, still a great need for amateur playwrights as a body to make more effort to realise that the eyes of an audience must be given more (and more constant) employment than they are at present allowing for—both in the way of variety and interest of setting, and in the use of the players in changing unities of pictorial composition (instead of for characterisation only, which is too often the case at present.) These are invaluable factors in gaining and holding the audience's attention; and too many playwrights are limiting their own chances of success by ignoring them, or being unsympathetic to them.

One of the chief hindrances to the development of the great amateur movement in British Drama is the kitchen play, and this is especially the case with Village Drama (in which it is so easy to assume that cottage audiences will understand cottage-kitchen settings best): while one of the sore burdens of adjudicators in these competitions is the kitchen play with only three characters, of which one makes a final exit after a brief opening scene.

This is connected with the amateur playwright's second great need: to realise that a play is more than conversation. There are competitors who arrive at considerable skill in the writing and management of dialogue yet never achieve a play that deserves an award; they do not bring enough of any other

quality to it. The adjudicators feel that one contributory cause of this (so far as these competitions are concerned) is the fixing, in the Rules and Regulations, of a quarter of an hour as the minimum duration of a play: in this year's Class II c. (A One-act Play for women) for instance, there is an entry in Yorkshire dialect—"After T'Sewing Meetin'" —which speedily resolves itself into a conversational duologue: the conversation is interesting and full of character, the dialogue admirable, but a work that so shirks difficult aspects of drama cannot receive full credit for these qualities only. If the minimum length for a one-act play were made half-an-hour (with a corollary of a maximum of forty minutes), these mere conversations would not appear so satisfactory when drawn out to the greater length; and writers would feel more clearly the need for variety and incident in the choice of story, and more invention and imagination in its development to avoid monotony. The triple bill of one-act plays is often especially useful in village entertainments: this also postulates a play lasting from thirty to forty minutes as the most suitable, and from every point of view the adjudicators would like to suggest a change in the Rules.*

In conclusion they would like to express a special measure of gratitude for the decreasing number of entrants who submit plays on flimsy paper typed in single spaces on worn-out typewriters with exhausted ribbons.

CLASS 1. TRANSLATIONS

The principal entry in this class is a series of "Seven Whitsun Plays of Hans Sachs," by "Nameless." These are works of much merit, shewing skill and resource and considerable competence—but they are bound to suffer

* The promoters of the Competition heartily agree with the Adjudicators' comments on the length of the One-act Play, as making for better drama. At the same time, the regulations of so many festivals and competitions in the country, limiting the time of performance to twenty minutes, are responsible for making this the minimum. It may be noted, however, that in the National Festival of Community Drama, a maximum of 40 minutes for each play entered is allowed.

EIGHTH VILLAGE PLAY-WRITING COMPETITION

by comparison with a number of similar plays after Hans Sachs which were presented in these Competitions two years ago. In comparison these plays are not so pointed and telling and attractive to produce—the reason of this being, perhaps, that the translator is using too free a hand, and becoming an adapter where adaptation is bound to mean dilution and weakening of the simple points that Sachs loved to make. Two of the series that are done into verse are exceptions to this: they are much more attractive and able than the rest. The prose versions appear too rudimentary and simple, skeletons deprived of their richest means of expression and finish. Sachs invented these actions for expression in verse; and without the point and symmetry and shapeliness of a versification akin to his, they do not give us what he meant them to give, or make all the effect and point he intended or they are capable of. The two plays done into simple and appropriate verse are much superior to the rest, besides offering a specially excellent discipline for village actors. As the award ought to be given to a single play, "Happy as a King" is recommended for a first prize, and that, and "The Return of Saint Peter," are recommended for publication.

"A Legend of Holy Night," by Hans Trausil, "Hence," (Miss E. Oules) receives Honourable Mention and is recommended for publication. The original of this slight piece must have great charm; the translator has indicated this adequately, and in the lyrical parts more than adequately. The language of the blank verse is rather cumbrous and formal, and would gain by being made more vocal and natural.

CLASS II (a). ONE-ACT COMEDY

There is no award in this Class, most of the entries hesitating between stale farcical situations and photographic literalism, with little idea of development. The only play in this series to be taken at all seriously is "First Catch Your Poacher," by Zachery: this has some sense of the stage, and the writer has a nice eye both for country come and character; but the development is too halting and the ending too lame to permit of an award.

CLASS II (b). SERIOUS. 1. Realistic.

"Plenty of Time," by "Weston" is by far the best play sent in this year: it would do the author credit anywhere, and it receives a first prize and is recommended for publication. It is a kitchen play: but a work of this beautiful and impressive quality cannot suffer from any such qualification. It touches life and real issues at first hand—and with a sure hand: the language and characterisation are excellent, and—rarest thing of all—character develops with the progress of the play. "Skimmity," by "Court Bratton" has a good subject, well seen and excellent opening and exposition. The development is too slight, and turns what might have been a play into an anecdote: but its vision and promise deserve an Honourable Mention.

CLASS II (b). SERIOUS: 2. Romantic or Poetic.

"The Defeated," by C.C.L. is a historical play of exceptional quality. It brings home the Norman Conquest more simply and directly with such an uncomfortable first-hand knowledge of what it meant, than the adjudicators remember having met with elsewhere. The action might be made clearer, with more definite statement of the central idea, and something easier to grasp in the conversation at the opening: the play receives a first prize and is recommended for publication, but the author is recommended to reconsider the play from this point of view before letting it go to press. Otherwise the straight, every-day language is artistically used and enormously increases the effect of the action. This is a first-rate little work for boys' schools and young men's clubs: if the writer can display and illuminate other epochs equally well, he might do a valuable series of one-act historical glimpses—and all the better if, as in this case, they are about unknown people.

"The Nail," by "Puk" is a play of considerable merit, on an excellent idea well set out. The language is sometimes stilted and does not move well enough, and the ending loses in interest a little. The play receives Honourable Mention, but the writer would do well to reconsider it before it goes forward for publication.

EIGHTH VILLAGE PLAY-WRITING COMPETITION

"The Witch Cat," by "Viking" has a plot that is not new: but it is well managed in detail, with adequate invention. It is worth attention on account of the promising quality of the verse in which it is written, that is well managed and characteristic and gives it the right to exist in verse. The writer has a definite gift and ought to be able to do something more with it: and has also an idea (as in the witch-ballet), of making visual effect serve poetry's purpose. It receives an Honourable Mention.

CLASS II (c). ONE-ACT PLAY FOR WOMEN

"My Herbert Says," by Zachery is an interesting, well-managed, amusing play—faltering a little perhaps in the end, but not beyond being put right in the actual playing by gaining impetus. A good and intelligent play that should act well, and that receives an Honourable Mention with a recommendation for publication.

"The Pity of It," by "Folly." A straight and true and tender little piece—done at first-hand, with a simplicity that is almost like inspiration. It is, however, an incident or snapshot rather than a play: more development of the theme is needed to make a drama of it—and in any case its theme would make it useless for village work, so that it cannot be recommended for publication. It receives an Honourable Mention for its promise.

CLASS III. FULL LENGTH PLAY

There are no awards in this class. The best play sent in is "Defiance," by "Britric"; but it is too much on the pattern of "Milestones" and too patchy in execution and effect to merit any award. It is also far too wordy; and its length in performance would probably be so great as to disqualify it on the two hours' time limit.

CLASS IV. AN OUTDOOR PLAY

"When the Queen Passed By," by "Titterhill." A shapely and well-planned piece of work: the characters are unhackneyed, the diversions of detail are managed in a workman-like way, the verse is well done and tastes of the period surprisingly. A good deal of unostentatious cultivation has gone to it; yet it is exactly suited to its rustic purpose. It

receives a first prize, and is recommended for publication.

31st December, 1931.

PENELOPE WHEELER.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY.

LIST OF AWARDS

CLASS I. TRANSLATION from the German of Hans Sachs. First Prize,—"Happy as a King," by Nameless. (Miss Evelyn Oules, 12, Bryanston Square, W.1.)

Hon. Mention,—"A Legend of Holy Night," from the German of Hans Trausil, by Hence. (Miss Evelyn Oules.)

CLASS IIa. ONE-ACT COMEDY. No award in this class (see rule 4). Hon. Mention,—"First Catch Your Poacher," by Zachery. (Mrs. Fitch, Vine Cottage, Bishops, Lydeard, Som.)

CLASS IIb. SERIOUS ONE-ACT PLAY. First Prize,—"Plenty of Time," by Weston (Miss Maysel Jenkinson, Post office Lane, Glemsford, Suffolk. Hon. Mention,—"Skimmity," by Court Brandon, (E. F. Boulting, The Writers' Club, 10, Norfolk Street, W.C.2.).

CLASS IIb. (2). ROMANTIC OR POETIC. First Prize,—"The Defeated," by C.C.L., (10 Court Road, Horfield, Bristol). Hon. Mention,—"The Nail," by Puk. (Mr. George E. Pope, 41, S. Cuthbert Street, Wells, Som.), and "The Witch Cat," by Viking, (Alberta Vickridge, Beamsley House, Frizinghall, Bradford, Yorks).

CLASS IIc. ONE-ACT PLAY FOR WOMEN. No prize awarded (see rule 4). Hon. Mention,—"My Herbert says," by Zachery. (Mrs. Fitch, Vine Cottage, Bishops Lydeard, Somerset), and "The Pity of it," by Folly, (Mrs. Pratt, Woburn Vicarage, Beds.).

CLASS III. FULL LENGTH PLAY. No award in this class (see rule 4). Hon. Mention,—"Defiance," by Britric, (Mr. T. B. Morris, 25, New Church Street, Tetbury, Glos.).

CLASS IV. AN OUTDOOR PLAY. First Prize, —"When the Queen Passed by," by Tittenhall (Mrs. Gandy, Clunbury, Aston on Clun, Salop.).

PLAYS MENTIONED IN REPORT without receiving awards.—"Return of St. Peter," from Hans Sachs. Miss Evelyn Oules. "First Catch Your Poacher," by Zachery (Mrs. Fitch, Vine Cottage, Bishops Lydeard, Som.). "Defiance," by Britric (Mr. T. B. Morris, 25, New Church Street, Tetbury, Glos.).

The promoters of the Competition take this opportunity of expressing their deep gratitude to Mrs. Penelope Wheeler, and to Dr. Gordon Bottomley for their kindness in adjudicating the Competition. In them we have two judges who have an exceptional sympathy with the work in the villages and a considerable experience of its results; they are always out to help us to raise the standard of plays for the villages, and spare no pains in the adjudication of the competition.

NINTH VILLAGE PLAY-WRITING COMPETITION

THE regulations for this year's Competition will be found on the third page of the cover. In this place I should like to say a little about the plays we need, because now that the Village Drama Society has amalgamated with the British Drama League, I am for the first time addressing a different and wider public through the pages of Drama. To these new readers I wish to say that we have for eight years held these competitions in order to obtain a greater number of suitable plays for use in villages and small rural communities. The type of play needed is governed by the conditions which obtain in the majority of these small societies, *i.e.*, small halls, with small stages, and no elaborate stage equipment, very little room for storing scenery and properties, simple lighting, etc., and as a rule very little money to spend on the productions. Because when you have only room for 100-150 spectators, and your prices vary from 2/- to 3d., you obviously cannot afford a large outlay. The village players are intelligent, keen, and very intelligent, and many of them have long ago passed the preliminary stages, and can appreciate a really good, well-written play, so that it is a mistake to give them second-rate stuff. At the same time, the kind of play which, however well-written, deals with sophisticated love-affairs in a London flat, or alternately with the adventures of common mistresses and pert maids, is definitely not wanted. A good story of real human interest should be chosen, with plenty of action, and characters within the experience or imagination of country players. It is useless to ask them to play countesses or gigolos. We have had a large number of plays set in a cottage room, generally a kitchen, and depending chiefly on talk. What we really want at the moment is originality of setting and theme, as well as more movement and action, and less chat. We should like too to remind writers that village players and audiences have not yet quite outgrown the rough humour of the Elizabethans. Imaginative and fantastic plays of the right type are also needed, with plenty of humour,—and real stories.

I hope very much that these few hints may help dramatists to give us what we want,

and I hope very much for an even larger entry this year, and that a fresh set of playwrights will realise that village players are worth writing for.

The Secretary of the Village Drama Section, British Drama League, 8, Adelphi Terrace, W.C.2., will be pleased to send copies of the regulations to anyone who asks for them.

JANET SCRUTTON.

The dramatic section of the recreation club of the Reading Biscuit Factory (Messrs. Huntley and Palmer), gave a most spirited performance of Jerome K. Jerome's play "The Celebrity," on the 12th and 13th January. Perhaps Messrs. Huntley and Palmer will christen a biscuit in honour of the occasion by calling it "The Celebrity." The presentation of the play certainly warrants some such drastic recognition. It is an amusing play but perhaps not Mr. Jerome at his best—however the players gave full point to all the author gave them. Mrs. Cohen, who produced, is to be congratulated on her work. The play had gusto which was essential to it—we gratefully missed the usual amateur lag. We have to thank the Celebrity himself played by Mr. Charles Uzell for the pace—it was an excellent performance on his part—although I think a little more charm here and there would have made us realise why the cork "fell for him." Mr. Shepherd who played the part of the Friend to the Celebrity acted quite well—and so did Miss Wheeler, and Miss Warren. The Cook (not by any means an ordinary Cook) was extremely well played by Miss Violet Pollard. The other artists did excellently especially the quiet restrained acting of Mr. Hibbird as Joseph Onions.

Mr. Thomas Leaver the stage manager has a natural flair for scenic effect—but Mr. Leaver beware of double swing doors on a side entrance—they are always a nuisance!

The play was preceded by some delightful singing by a male quartette, members, of course, of the firm of Huntley and Palmers. They really were excellent.

Mrs. Cohen has reason to be proud of her band of celebrities—as indeed they all are.

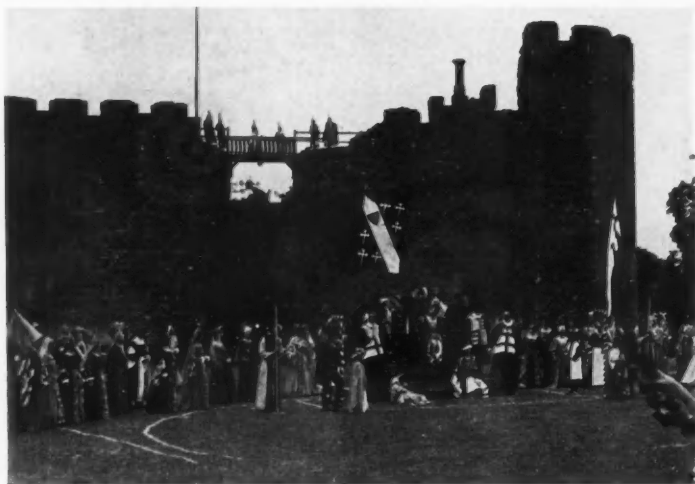
ALAN NASH.

Until I saw The Old Dunstonians in "You Never Can Tell," I refused to believe that amateurs would be successful with this play again. Most societies are dire in it. They either do it in modern dress and nineteenth century setting or period costumes and a manner that is something between Charley's Aunt and Gilbert and Sullivan. The Old Dunstonians went all out for modern Shaw and whether it was right or wrong it was perfect entertainment. Colin Martin produced and also played Valentine. He is a young man with more wit and commonsense than most and is rapidly leading this Society to an important place in the front rank.

JOHN BOURNE.



SCENE FROM "THE ENCHANTED PALACE."
SAINT LAWRENCE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE,
ISLE OF WIGHT.



FRAMLINGHAM PAGEANT.
THE DUKE'S RETURN.



LAUNCESTON PAGEANT.
THE MOURNING PEASANT
WOMEN OF THE CORNISH
REBELLION, 1536.

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE NOTES



THE JOURNAL OF

THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

INCORPORATING
THE VILLAGE DRAMA SOCIETY

President :

LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN.

Chairman of the Council :

H. GRANVILLE-BARKER.

Secretary : GEOFFREY WHITWORTH.

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Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal.

IN presenting our readers with this special Double Number of Drama, no apology is needed for the fact that it deals almost exclusively with only one aspect of the League's work and interest. The Annual Report of the Village Drama Society is a record of which Miss Kelly and her colleagues may be justly proud, while the items of news from over a hundred Village Societies throughout the country will give every member of the Drama League an insight into the peculiar difficulties and delights of Village Drama. Village players suffer under many handicaps; they are, on the other hand, gifted with certain advantages that are lacking elsewhere. In a Village the community spirit is native, does not need to be artificially engendered, and so it is, or should be, easy for all classes and all degrees of education to work together. What this means in the production of a play need not be stressed here. Among the handicaps of village drama remains the difficulty of finding suitable plays at a fee which is not quite prohibitive. In this connection we would draw the attention of our

dramatist readers to the Village Drama Play-writing Competition and to the report by last year's adjudicators—Dr. Gordon Bottomley and Miss Janet Scrutton.

Following Mr. MacGillivray's opinion on the Author's Fee question which was reprinted in the last number of Drama, we have received enquiries, prompted by the discussion at the Hull Conference, as to whether a stage performance and a play-reading is to be regarded as identical in respect of the duty of paying author's fees. The reading of a play is undoubtedly an "accoustic representation" and therefore a "performance" within the meaning of the Copyright Act, 1911. Further light is thrown on the meaning of performance by the exception contained in Section 2 (1), (VI). It is there declared that it is not an infringement of copyright for one person to read or recite in public any reasonable extract from any published work. The inference is that a reading or recitation in public of the whole work or of anything beyond 'a reasonable extent,' is an infringement and *a fortiori* if a number of persons take part and the work is a dramatic work. The above opinion is also that of Mr. MacGillivray, and was printed, by resolution of the League's Council, in the number of Drama dated January, 1925.

It should be noted that besides the "Recent Additions to the Library" listed in the last number of Drama, there is a collection of original plays in MS. which are available for consideration by members of the League. Among recent additions are three one-act plays, "A Body for the Surgeon," by Ada Heather-Bigg, "The Piping of the She," by Eleanor Garland, and "The Illusionist," by Philip Johnson.

Some usual items in our "contents" are perforce held over to our next number, including "News from North and South" for the omission of which we tender apologies to several correspondents. Among features in the March issue will be an article by Miss Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies on "Dramatized Biography," based on her recent lecture at the Drama League Club Room, and a special survey of the Village Drama Movement in Scotland, contributed by Mr. Hal D. Stewart.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

DRAMA IN ISLE OF ARRAN

THE first Drama Festival in Arran was held at Lamlash on the last two days of January, 1931. His Grace the Duke of Montrose presided. Her Grace The Duchess of Montrose, and Mary, Duchess of Hamilton gave their patronage and support and were keenly interested in the performance of each team. Miss Elliot Mason adjudicated. Seven teams (almost one from each village round the Island) competed. Brodick giving "In a Dentist's Waiting-room"; Shiskine, "Mrs. Char Rules the Roost"; Kilmorie, "Courtin Christina"; Lochranza, "The Perfect Butler"; Pirmill, "Exit Mrs. McLeerie"; Corrie, "Visiting Day at the Hospital"; Lamlash, "Telling the Tale."

Lamlash gained highest marks and so were chosen to go forward to compete at the Glasgow Festival a month later. The Arran Festival was most successful considering none of the members attended a Drama School and after paying all expenses £50 was handed over to the Scottish Community Drama Association.

MARY GRAHAM.
Hon. Treas., W.R.I.

BEDFORD COUNTY FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

There are 50 Institutes in the county with a membership of 2537. In June, 1931, "The Masque of the Lady Margaret," a chronicle play showing events in the life of the mother of Henry VII, was performed four times in Bedford Park. 37 villages supplied 270 actors, 120 dancers and 90 singers.

Five scenes with prologue, epilogue and interludes, presented each by different groups of Institutes, were linked together by classical dances designed to represent the passing of time, which made it possible to present the masque without a pause except for scene shifting, which occupied less than two minutes at the end of each scene.

Dialogue, written in modern English, contributed to the naturalness of the performance. Doubts had been expressed as to the wisdom of giving so many amateur actors speech on a large open-air stage before a large audience, so microphones were installed, but when no wind was blowing the words of most of the players could be heard without any artificial aid.

Lists of books were issued and upwards of 60 lectures on life in the 15th century were given to the Institutes, this study of the period undoubtedly assisted the players in their successful presentation of the atmosphere of the middle ages. The dresses were designed with attention to historical detail, and coloured sketches were supplied to the players, most of the costumes were home-made at reasonable cost.

The very valuable training and experience gained in producing the masque will assist the Institutes considerably in future efforts at play production. Much hidden talent has been discovered and interest in dramatic activities has been greatly stimulated.

BUCKS FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES.

The Drama Sub-Committee of the B.F.W.I. has been endeavouring to encourage interest in Dramatic work during the year.

A successful Drama Festival was held for two days in Aylesbury in March. Twenty-two teams competed as against thirteen in the previous year. For the first time teams could enter in classes for modern and also for original plays. In other years only Shakespeare had been performed.

In October, one day Drama Schools were held in High Wycombe, Bletchley, and Aylesbury, conducted by Mr. Leo Baker. The average of attendances was higher than in 1930, and those who did attend, enjoyed the schools thoroughly and learned a great deal that was useful, both for producing and acting in villages.

C. GAMLIN,
Hon. Sec., Drama Sub-Committee.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL DRAMA GROUP

The Annual Drama Competitions took place in March, 1931. The Group were again fortunate in being able to use the Festival Theatre, Cambridge, through the kindness of Mr. Terence Gray.

Nine villages entered a total of twelve teams.

The plays selected by competitors were:—"The Miss Dodsons That Were," "The Deluge" (Miracle Play), "Eldorado," "The School for Scandal," "Macbeth," "Milestones," while the Harston Group produced an original play entitled "The Grey Falcon."

Miss Pickersgill was the adjudicator. She commented on the improvement of the work in general.

Seven casts were placed in the first class obtaining over 75% of marks.

A second school for Producers was held in October, 1931, conducted by Mrs. Oliver Prior, sixteen students attending the whole course and six attending single lectures.

The Group arranges for visits of Advisers to mixed Village Drama Groups under the scheme financed by the Carnegie Trustees, three Groups have been helped in this way during the present session.

Preparations are well in hand for the Competition in April, 1932.

DEVON RURAL DRAMATIC FESTIVAL

The seventh Devon Rural Dramatic Festival was held in Tavistock Town Hall, on 2nd December last, with Mr. Arnold Riley of the University College of the South West, Exeter as Adjudicator. There were entries from Tavistock Grammar School, St. Michael's in the Moor School, Yelverton Guides, Tavistock and Whitchurch Rangers, Meavy and Kelly Village Drama Societies, Buckland Monachorum Women's Institute, and Horrabridge Village Club. With one exception all were awarded first or second class Certificates.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

Speaking of the Junior Section, Mr. Riley said the plays were very well performed in regard to time, and on account of the simplicity of their stages in which no more than the essential items were included. Of the adult performances he declared, "I think to-night that the standards of performance have been all extraordinarily high. In no case has there been any instance where a cast has not worked as a team—and that is the greatest thing of all in drama."

EAST LOTHIAN FEDERATION

During the winter of 1930-1931, four of our Institutes studied Dramatic Art in classes held co-operatively by the Federation, and the Education Committee of the County. Owing to a mistake about dates, only one Institute entered for the National Festival of Community Drama, and it unfortunately had to withdraw, owing to illness.

Two of our teachers were from Miss Sybil Attwells School of Speech Training, Stanwick Place, Edinburgh, and Miss Donald, Edinburgh, taught the other two classes.

ABERLADY Class studied "The Poacher," "Diplomacy and the Draughtsman," "The Gundy Shop," "The McLearys," and "Buntly Pulls the Strings" was commenced. The first four were produced at a local Entertainment, while they played "Diplomacy and the Draughtsman" at our Federation Bulb Show.

CROSS ROADS studied "The Dear Departed," "The Matrimonial Tea Party," and "Waiting for the 'Bus.'" They also took part in the Federation Bulb Show, and produced "The Matrimonial Tea Party" later in the year putting up an entertainment and giving all the plays they had studied, with the addition of "St. Valentine's Day," and the Afternoon call.

HADDINGTON studied and produced, in a most excellent manner, "The Professor's Love Story" giving a performance last spring, and again in October, in aid of their Local Cottage Hospital.

PRESTON KIRK, studied "The Gundy Shop," "Boss o' the Hoos," and "The Price of Coal," all of which they produced at a local entertainment, while they played "The Gundy Shop" at the Federation Bulb Show.

Haddington has again been able to undertake a Class and they have already entered two teams for the National Festival of Community Drama, to be held in Edinburgh. The other Institutes, though equally keen, found it wiser, for economy reasons, not to have classes this winter, but they hope much to be able to do so during the next season.

ESSEX FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

The Drama Section of the Women's Institute has gone ahead in Essex again this year. The Competitions were again held at Braintree and Colchester and were judged by Lady Benson.

The policy pursued this year was somewhat different to previous years when Institutes had made their own choice of plays, this year however, a list of plays was given as follows:—"The Tragedy of Nan," by Masfield (first act); "The Bishop's Candlesticks," by Norman McKinnel; Any translation of Comedies and Tragedies

from Moliere, Ibsen or Sierra; Classical Plays translated by Gilbert Murray; Little Plays of St. Francis, by Laurence Housman; "Everybody's Husband," by Gilbert Cannon; "The K.C.'s Comedy."

One member attended the Drama School with a bursary which was obtained by the joint efforts of the County Rural Community Council and the Federation of Essex Women's Institutes. The member writes very warmly of the help given at the Drama School.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE—Chairman, Miss L. C. Hyett; Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Seeley, Mrs. Morton Howard. The General Committee is composed of representatives of Village Societies and several co-opted members. The Committee organised the first Gloucestershire Village Drama Festival in 1929, and the entries last year were so numerous, that for 1932 it has been decided to hold Preliminary Festivals in four different centres in the County, the best teams from which will go forward for final adjudication at Cheltenham.

A Panel of Drama Advisers has been formed to give expert advice to villages taking up drama work on choice of play, casting, production, etc. The Village Drama Society's Annual School was held at Cirencester in September and proved very successful, 26 students attending from Gloucestershire.

DRAMA FESTIVAL, 1931.—6TH AND 7TH MARCH. Adjudicators,—Miss Mary Kelly and Mr. John H. Moss. The following put on plays for adjudication:—W.E.A. Tuffley Group, Welford-on-Avon Amateur Dramatic Society, The Painswick Players, Northleach Women's Institute, W.E.A. Oval Group, Withington Players, Uley Village Players, Brockworth and Witcombe Women's Institute, The Gloucester Mimmers, Hempstead School, Birdlip Women's Institute, Withington Women's Institute, Bourton-on-the-Water Women's Institute, Hempstead Women's Institute, Tuffley and Whaddon Amateur Dramatic Society, Castle Tump, Norton Women's Institute, Longhope, Preston Women's Institute, Churcham Women's Institute, Iron Acton Women's Institute, Oldbury-on-Severn, Campden Amateur Dramatic Society, Haresfield Girl's Friendly Society, W.E.A. Hucclecote Group.

HERTFORDSHIRE DRAMA SUB-COMMITTEE

A Dramatic Competition was held in November 1931 for which the following institutes competed.—Essendon, Little Gaddesden, Widford, Buntingford, Woolmer Green, Holwell, North Mymms, South Harpenden, Bovingdon, Aldenham, Northaw. Mrs. Wheeler the adjudicator, placed Essendon 1st and Little Gaddesden 2nd.

SCENES FOR COMPETITION.—"Mr. Sampson" by George Lee, or any scene or scenes from "King Lear" lasting not less than 18 minutes or more than 25 minutes and containing not less than four speaking parts. Last year (1930) a Verse Speaking Competition was held for which there were 180 competitors from 30 Institutes. Miss Brettell, the judge, placed Mrs. Armstrong (Buntingford) 1st and Miss Perkins (Ashwell) 2nd.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

It is reported that many W.I.'s. have been holding Competitions on the same lines as the Verse Speaking Competition; also that a School-mistress, on being congratulated by an H.M. Inspector on the standard of her pupils' Recitation, attributes their success to the help she received as a competitor of the Verse Speaking Competition.

T. BARCLAY,
Hon. Sec. of the Drama Sub-Committee.

HEREFORDSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

HEREFORDSHIRE. The effect of the Drama Schools held in 1930 and 1931 is becoming more pronounced as time goes on. For the 1931 Festival only 2 entries were procured but, through the efforts of the County Drama League—a unit of the Rural Community Council, affiliated to the British Drama League, 16 teams—chiefly from villages and Women's Institutes, have entered for the Hereford Section of the Midland Division. This shows the greater interest that is now being taken in dramatic work in all parts of the County. Four of the plays entered have been written by local authors who intend to submit them for the League's competition. There is no doubt that the two days' competition is stimulating a great deal of interest and many villages have rehearsed several plays before deciding on the selected one for competition.

The County Drama League is only in its infancy but the Committee intends, during the coming year, to give every facility and help to dramatic groups by sending advisors, suggestions for plays and lending scenery, properties and lighting effects whenever possible. The Herefordshire Community Players have secured a room in Hereford which has been fitted up as a miniature theatre and will hold about 160 people. The Club offers the use of it to any group of players which is unable to do its work under stage conditions. Many teams have stated that they wish to make use of this during the coming year. Any particulars may be obtained from the Secretary, County Drama League, 7, St. Owen St., Hereford.

PERCY M. THOMPSON,
Secretary.

STEWARTRY OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT, 1931

This last year has been the busiest on record. Three large central classes—and from these, five plays were produced at the S.C.D.A. Festival. The following were the plays:—"At the Well of Bethlehem" "The Scarecrow," "The Poacher," "The Spaewife," "The Patchwork Quilt," "The Guinea's Stamp." One play, "The Poacher," was placed second in the Division, and had also the honour of being placed second in the Anstruther Gray Cup Competition open to all S.W.R.I. teams in Scotland. 10 Village Classes were also organised and much good work done by voluntary workers. These classes had entertainments in the villages, and the three larger classes had excellent entertainments in Castle Douglas, where "Bunty pulls the Strings" was performed. In Kirkcudbright, where "Yellow Sands" was the Play chosen, and in Dalbeattie, where a variety entertainment with Plays, Songs, Mimes and Dances were given which included "The Black Horseman" and "The Baby and the Butterfly."

LANARKSHIRE FEDERATION, SCOTTISH WOMEN'S RURAL INSTITUTES, 1931

The dramatic classes held in the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, under the Carnegie Trust Grant to the S.W.R.I., have borne good fruit and, in 1931, although no money from this source was received, flourishing dramatic groups continued in the following places:—Lanark (a centre attended by members of various W.R.I.), Carstairs, Lesmahagow, New Trows, Allanton, Skirling and Glespin. All of these groups, except Carstairs and Skirling, entered teams for the S.C.D.A. Festival at Lanark, the plays performed being—Lanark Group, "Mr. Sampson"; Lesmahagow, "Mr. Sampson" and "Telling the Tale"; New Trows, "The Dear Departed" and "The Muckleyett Players Rehearse"; Allanton, "Miss MacTavish's Tea Party"; Glespin, "The Auction Mart." ("The Muckleyett Players Rehearse" was written by their producer, Mrs. Douglas, for the New Trows players.)

The Carstairs and Skirling players gave very enjoyable performances at the W.R.I. County Rally in March, of (respectively) "Six Hundred Chicks" and "Glensheugh."

This year, there has been even more dramatic activity and several new groups have been started. Of great assistance to these new groups is the class for dramatic producers at Lanark, organised by the Lanarkshire Education Committee, the lecturer being Mr. Parry Gunn of Glasgow.

Last year, a very small grant was given to the County by the Scottish Joint Committee of Music and Drama. This was not for the W.R.I. exclusively, but two of the W.R.I. groups, all of which are open to men, received assistance.

There are 41 Institutes in the Federation, with a membership of approximately 2,000.

E. B. BERTRAM,
Secretary.

LANCASHIRE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

The Lancashire Federation of Women's Institutes, in conjunction with the Adult Education Department of the Lancashire County Council, held a two days' School for Producers in the Spring. Miss Macnamara, Community Secretary of the British Drama League, gave a series of talks on Production, Costume, Indoor Settings, Lighting, Make-up, etc., and gave practical help and advice on the production of two plays which had been previously rehearsed.

The Annual Drama Competition open to members of Women's Institutes in the county took place in the autumn when there was again an increase in the number of entries. Class 5 (Recitation) was an innovation this year and drew forth quite a number of entries. The plays chosen were:—Class 1. Shakespeare. "As You Like It." Act 3, Scene 2; Class 2. One-Act Play (Large Cast). "Footprints," by Violet Methley. Class 3, One-Act Play (Small Cast). "Wrong Numbers," by Essex Dane. Class 4, Dialect Play, "Tyranny and Tea Cakes," by Olive Popplewell. Class 5, Recitation, a. (Serious) "Killed at the Ford," Longfellow; b. (Humorous), "The Bishop and the Caterpillar," by Mary Manners.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

Single lectures and demonstrations have also been given to Women's Institutes during the year on—*a.*, Stage planning with model stage; *b.*, The making of costumes and white wigs; *c.*, Make-up suitable for oil lamp lighting.

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

Five Institutes in this Federation entered for the Leicestershire Rural Community Council Drama Competition and one (Tugby) reached the finals with "Eldorado," a rural play by Bernard Gilbert. At our Federation Fete held in Leicester on July 18th, 1931, Mrs. C. Roberts and Mrs. A. Toone, members of our Drama Sub-Committee, produced with great success "The Laughing Mind," an Elizabethan Pastoral by Harold Brighouse, and "The Banns of Marriage," by Charles Lee, respectively. "The Goddess of the Countryside," a masque arranged by Mrs. K. E. Roberts, into which Garden Group and Season Competitions were introduced, absorbed the energies of many of our members and was much admired. Our small lending library of plays has been constantly used. Courses of six lectures on Drama have become increasingly popular with our Institutes. There are now 108 W.I.'s. in our Federation.

M. S. HALLIDAY,
L. & R. Federation Secretary.

LINCOLNSHIRE (LINDSEY) RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL DRAMA

As the result of Courses on the Drama held at various centres, a number of new village dramatic societies have been formed and many excellent productions by these village groups have been staged during the past winter.

With the aid of bursaries granted by the Joint Committee in charge of the Music and Drama Fund established by the Carnegie Trustees, a number of Lindsey Students have been assisted to attend the British Drama League Holiday Schools. Altogether five bursaries have been received for these Schools during the past year—three for the Summer School at Norwich, one for the School of Religious Drama at Bournemouth in December, and one for the Easter School at Kensington. In addition one bursary was received to enable a student to attend the Citizen House School at Hampstead.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

Much activity has been shown by the Northamptonshire Federation of Women's Institutes during the past year.

At the Annual Rally at Castle Ashby in July a continuous programme of plays and concerts was given from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. These drew crowded "houses" and, as a finale, an impromptu Charade was given by some of the members of the Music and Drama Sub-Committee, including Mrs. Wentworth Watson, (Chairman), Lady Henley, Mrs. Stephen Schilizzi, Mrs. Raynsford and Mrs. Corner.

In November a Drama Festival was held throughout the County. The Preliminary Area Festivals were held in five centres and attracted 36 entries, the adjudicator being Edward Lewis, Esq., M.A., of the British Drama League. Ten of these teams reached the 80% standard necessary to entitle them to enter the Final Festival. This was held on November 28th in Northampton, and was judged by Miss Esme Church, who remarked on the very high standard of the productions.

The results were as follows:—

1ST CLASS, 90% AND OVER.—Brackley, "Bethlehem": Clipston, "Merry Wives of Windsor," Act 2, Sc. 1, Act 3, Sc. 3; Hardingstone, "Twelfth Night," Act 2, Sc. 3 and 5; Milton, "Taming of the Shrew," Act 5, Sc. 2; Watford, "The Apple Tree."

2ND CLASS, 80%—90%.—Achurch, "The Happy Man"; Geddington and Newton, "The Golden Doom"; Harlestone, "Henry VI," Part 2, Act 2, Sc. 2; Polebrook, "The Simple Sketch."

OXFORDSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

We held our drama school in October, the subjects dealt with being acting, verse speaking, mime, voice production, make-up, and simple effects on a curtained stage. The Festivals were held in November and December, the centres chosen being Islip, Thame, Woodstock and Nettlebed, while the central festival was held at Oxford, Mr. E. Lewis acting as judge. Twenty-three teams in all entered, of which 3 were school teams, 7 mixed, and the balance Women's Institutes. Sixteen were selected to come on to the two days festival at Oxford, when the judge awarded 'A' certificates to seven of them. The festivals showed a distinct advance both in the range of plays selected and in the general standard of acting and production. A condition of the festivals is that all plays are produced on a curtained box stage.

SHROPSHIRE COUNTY SUB-COMMITTEE

We are able to report that a very successful County Drama Festival was held at the County Theatre, Shrewsbury, during the first week in June. There were entries from over thirty teams of players and these players came from all parts of the County. As this was the first attempt to hold a County Festival the Committee were very gratified to meet with such a splendid response. The adjudicator was Mr. F. Sladen-Smith and his comments and criticism proved of immense value and interest to both players and audience. One afternoon was devoted to plays by children and it is expected that many more entries from schools, etc., will be received this year. The Festival did much to stimulate interest in Drama in all parts of the County and several new groups of players have since been formed. It was also a financial success. During November and December four very successful One-day Schools were held at Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Ellesmere and Craven Arms. The Schools were most ably taken by Miss Isabel Chisman and all who attended went away full of enthusiasm. It is hoped that further Lectures and/or Demonstrations will be held in other districts.

The Committee are making arrangements to hold a second Festival in May this year (1932).

REPORTS FROM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS

SURREY COUNTY FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

This year has shown a stimulation of interest in Drama among the Institutes, and a great advance on the type of Play chosen for performance.

A Federation Entertainment was held at the Dorking Halls consisting of the best Plays selected from nine Groups, where, in most cases, preliminary Competitions were held.

The Plays performed were:—Scenes from "Robin Hood," by kind permission of Mr. Alfred Noyes; "The Golden Doom," by Lord Dunsany; "The King's Waistcoat" "Mrs. Adis," by Sheila Kaye-Smith; "A Visit to London" (Anonymous, but the draft of the story taken from records in the British Museum); "Godstowe Nunnery," by Laurence Binyon; "Willikens and His Dinah," (Traditional Ballad, mimed); "Footprints," by V. Methley; "The Cradle Song" (Act 1), translated by Garrett Underhill from the Spanish of E. Martinez Sierra.

Classes in Public Speaking have been arranged at the County Office.

WEST SUSSEX RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The efforts of the Rural Community Council are primarily towards the encouragement of Drama in Villages; but in the County Festival which we organised, and which is now proceeding, we have thrown the competition open to any Drama Society. It is, however, a curious fact that we have actually only two entries from Town Societies, the very large proportion

of the entries coming from Village Societies or Women's Institutes.

The Festival has clearly shown that Dramatic work of a very high order is being carried out in a certain number of Villages, and it will be our endeavour to encourage other Villages to do work of the same kind and to generally raise the standard of the work being done.

As a first year's attempt I think an entry of 20 Teams is by no means unsatisfactory.

Earlier in the year we had a School specially for Village Producers, which was conducted, under our auspices, by Mr. Leo Baker and Mr. Robert Newton. This School was well attended, and it is the intention of my Committee to run a similar School or Schools next year.

E. G. SHEPPARD,
Secretary.

YORKSHIRE COUNTY FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

The Annual Drama Competitions were held in May. There were 58 entries, of which 9 were Scenes from Shakespeare, and 5 were Original Plays. The adjudicator was Miss Esme Church who was most helpful.

There were two new items in the Schedule, *i.e.*, a Class for Pageant play and one for Mime. The former attracted only two entrants, and the Miming three. It is hoped however that there will be a number of entries for Mime in the 1932 Competitions, as a display was given by the Students of Hull University at the Half Yearly Council Meeting in York in November.

AMY K. HAMILTON,
Federation Secretary.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

ABBOTTS ANN W.I. DRAMA SECTION (HANTS)

Abbotts Ann has a population of 600, and we have 17 players in our W.I. Drama Section. During the past year we have given performances of a Shadow Pantomime, Nursery Rhymes, Scenes from "Jane Austen," "Henry VIII" and "Katherine Parr," by Maurice Baring, and the "Princess and the Woodcutter," by A. A. Milne. 6 members attended Mrs. Penelope Wheeler's School at Winchester, and three attended Miss Eileen Thorndyke's school at Andover. We are entering for the County W.I. Competition next April.

ADEL-CUM-ECUP (YORKS)

The Adel-cum-Ecup W.I. Dramatic Society have had a very busy year. The following plays have been produced:—"The Simple Sketch," "Mistress Runaway," "The Family Group."

Apart from these plays, the Society meets once a month for a reading, and these are held at members' houses. The average attendance is 16 and a very enjoyable evening is spent, members acting as hostesses in turn.

A team was sent to York in May to compete in the Yorkshire County Drama Competitions, and although they were not successful they thoroughly enjoyed their venture and are hoping to compete again after profiting by this year's experience.

An American Tea was held in May, at which the Dramatic Society gave a play. This proved a very big attraction and proved a great success both socially and financially.

"The Family Group" caused plenty of laughter at the Xmas Party and brought the year's work to a close.

E. HAITHWAITE.

ALDENHAM (HERTS)

ALDENHAM WOMEN'S INSTITUTE DRAMA SECTION

During the year the activities of the Section continued with twenty members. In April the three-act comedy "Diana of Dobsons" was produced at Letchmore Heath, having been entered for the Hertfordshire Rural Community Council's Drama Competition, open to the county, and Aldenham W.I. Drama Section were eventually judged the winners of a keen competition, and had the proud distinction of being awarded the "Philip Longmore" Shield on the first occasion of its presentation.

A team was entered for the Drama competition of the Herts Federation of Women's Institutes, the test being either a scene from "King Lear" or "Mr. Sampson." The Section chose the latter but were not so successful on this occasion. Sketches and one-act plays were also produced before other Women's Institutes.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

Members have since been rehearsing for a new effort for the Herts. County Competition for the new year.

Travelling to a centre convenient for rehearsals is a handicap as Aldenham comprises the small parish of that name and a scattered group of hamlets. Some of the members have to walk nearly three miles to the centre, returning the same distances at night to their homes as rehearsals can only take place in the evening.

(MRS.) GRACE SWEET,
Hon. Sec., Drama Section.

ALNMOUTH DRAMATIC SOCIETY (NORTHUMBERLAND)

For the first time the Women's Institute entered for the W.I. Drama Competition in Newcastle last spring—the play chosen was "A Bit of Help." The Alnmouth Players gave a good rendering of the Play, though they did not get an award. They hope to enter again this year.

The members who acted and those who watched felt they had learnt a great deal and are eager to enter again and do better.

In the summer a Fete in a garden in aid of the Red Cross and County Nursing Association the winning team of Players in the Newcastle competition from the Rennington W.I. acted 2 scenes from "As You Like It"

There were Greek Dances on the Terrace, and Dances of the "Four Winds" on the lawn which were very effective.

In November the Dramatic Society gave two plays, "In Safe Custody" and "No Smoke without Fire," both well performed. They were very much enjoyed by an appreciative audience.

ELLA PEASE,
Hon. Secretary.

THE APPEGARTH DRAMATIC CLUB (DUMFRIESSHIRE)

The Applegarth Dramatic Club, formed November, 1930. Performed Aladdin, Xmas 1930, for the School party. In February, joined by members of the Men's Institute, gave "Campbell of Kilmhor" (J. A. Ferguson) and "The Tea Party" (A. I. Douglas) at the Church Social. In May the producer attended lectures by Mr. W. G. Fay in Dumfries. In June the Club gave a performance to start a Fund so that they should not be dependent on the kindness of friends for the payment of Royalties and other expenses. Plays given were "For Sale," (A. I. Douglas), "In the Spring of the Year," (W. D. Cocker) and assisted by 53 School Children, "Rumpelstiltskin." Over £11 (eleven pounds) was cleared—The Hall has seating for 300 on benches, tickets were 2/4 and 1/2; some donations were received.

The Club has eleven W.R.I. members and nine Men's Institute members, and has entered for the S.C.D.A. Festival for 1932.

THE BARMOUTH AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY (MERIONETH)

Our membership is sparse, however, still having some original members left whose talents and keenness are invaluable; it makes our struggles worth while.

We produced "A Cuckoo in the Nest" in January, dramatic critics being much struck by the progress made by the players. Atmospheric and other effects necessary to create the required atmosphere were most realistic.

Despite trade depression we were encouraged by almost record houses, who, judging by the continual laughter and applause approved our play selection and also the rendering of this slight though intensely amusing farce.

Being equally well received at Criccieth and Towyn we are pleased to report that our tour was again successful from every point of view. Our total given to Charity in 9 years being over £800.

Our venture next month is another tour, this time with "The Ghost Train," part of the "Talkie" film of which being "shot" on Barmouth Bridge.

G. B. PIGGOTT,
Hon. Sec.

THE BEACONSFIELD PLAYERS CLUB (BUCKS)

The 1931-32 season of this Club opened on October 23rd with three short plays—"Pan in Pimlico," "Mrs. Adis," and "The Man Who Thought of Everything"—and the dialogue between Julia and Lucetta that comprises Scene II, Act I of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." Three one-act plays were also performed at the November meeting of the club. These were "Rococo," "Chinese White," and Tchekov's "On the High Road"—this last being the play with which it is intended to enter for the National Festival of Community Drama. In December members of the club gave six public performances of "The Ghost Train" which were well attended and enthusiastically received.

It has been arranged to give "The Thrice Promised Bride," "Shall we Join the Ladies," and "Fortunato" at the club meeting in March, and to close the season, in April, with three public performances of "The Pelican."

The Club has 285 members.

THE BEARSDEN DRAMATIC CLUB (DUMBARTON)

The Club membership is fully maintained at 58. In 1931 we gave a successful three-nights performance of "Quality Street," in aid of a local charity. Many of the costumes being made by our own members. Our "Club Night," hitherto open only to members and their immediate friends was held in a larger hall and thrown open to the public; this innovation proved a great success. Our Club Night consists of one-act plays selected from the best of those under rehearsal. At this performance we gave "Suppressed Desires," "The Spinsters of Lushe," "The Price of Coal," "Portrait of a Gentleman in Slippers," and "The Man Who Thought of Everything." After the performance Mr. Halbert Jattock gave a helpful criticism of the acting and production. In addition to the above we have also given performances in neighbouring districts in aid of local charities. Next year we hope to enter for the Scottish Community Drama Festival.

DUNCAN STEWART,
Hon. Secretary.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

BICTON AND DISTRICT W.I.D.S. (SALOP)

We commenced our activities in January, 1931, by presenting several scenes from "The Merry Wives of Windsor" in a public Hall in Shrewsbury, to help the funds of the B.W.T.A., this was very well received and enjoyed. We then became very busy preparing for the V.D.S. Drama Festival to be held in The Theatre, Shrewsbury, the first week in June. In the meantime we were asked by the W.I. County Federation to provide the entertainment at the Spring Group Conference in April. We gave "Women will Gossip." For the Festival we entered two plays "The Price of Coal," and "Feed the Brute," for each of which we received a 2nd Class Certificate. These plays we had previously acted in our own village also "Catherine Parr."

After the Festival the actors were all glad to rest on their laurels for a time, and have only just commenced on several scenes from "The Taming of the Shrew," with no fixed date for presentation.

Producer, ANNIE TEECE.

BISHAM WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (BUCKS)

During the year 1931 the Bisham Women's Institute has performed two small plays, and done "The Queen of Hearts" in mime.

The plays were "Michael," by Miles Malleon, and "The Spinsters of Lushe," by Philip Johnson. They were public performances, given at Bisham Abbey, kindly lent by our President, Lady Vansittart Neale, and the proceeds were sent to "The Friends of the Poor." The miming play was done at the Institute Christmas Party. Bisham is a small village with a population of seven hundred. We have 53 W.I. members, and 14 of them took parts in the different plays. The son of one of our members took the part of "Michael." There are at least 6 other members who have acted in plays done in former years.

Four of our members attended the Drama School held at Reading in October by Mr. Robert Newton, which they enjoyed immensely, and which stimulated them to attempt the miming play at the Christmas party.

K. HOWARD.

BISHOPSBOURNE DRAMATIC SOCIETY (KENT)

We gave two productions in 1931, commencing in February with a 3-act play called "Jane" which was a great success.

Our second performance took place on December 10th, when we gave "Buying a Gun," "My Turn Next" and a costume play "When Anne was Queen" which was remarkably good and fully appreciated by a crowded and enthusiastic audience.

Membership:—Ladies, 3; Gentlemen, 5.

V. K. CASTLE,
Hon. Sec.

BOURTON VILLAGE PLAYERS (SALOP)

This group has just completed its first year, and numbers 20 members out of a population of 120. We entered three plays for the first County Drama Festival at Shrewsbury in June, and were fortunate in winning a first-class certificate, as well as a second and third. We played "Muggeridge's Cow," and "The

Family Group," and "Women will Gossip." We are now (December 20th) rehearsing "The Grand Chain's Diamond," "The Dear Departed," and "Their Business in Great Waters" for a performance on January 2nd. We also hope to have a performance at Easter, and to take part in the next County Drama Festival in May, 1932, but have not yet settled our programme.

We were invited to act in neighbouring villages several times during the year, and have been honoured by being chosen to produce "Their Business in Great Waters" in aid of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution at Church Stretton in February.

Our Hon. Secretary, Miss Smith, and the Chairman attended a one-day Drama School at Bridgnorth in November.

GEORGIANA PEACH,
Chairman and Producer.

BOVEY TRACEY A.D.S. (DEVON)

The Bovey Tracey A.D.S. have been able to produce only one play in 1931—"Passing Brompton Road," of which one performance only was given on 21st May.

In July we played "Second Fiddle," by Dorothy Rowlands, (an open-air performance).

We have not been able to enter for any of the Drama Festivals nor have any of our members attended a Drama School.

There are 29 members of the A.D.S., but they do not all act.

R. P. BARROW,
Hon. Sec.

BROADWAY BEGINNERS (WORCS.)

Although governed by a Drama Sub-Committee elected by the Women's Institute Executive, we include keen men players drawn from the village, a number of whom serve on our Committee, one acting as Stage Manager.

Broadway (pop: about 2,000) is within easy access of the Evesham cinema, which makes the task of play selection no sinecure and we are grateful for the assistance of Mrs. Clement Parsons.

We played "A Hundred Years Old" by Seragin and Joaquin Alvarez Quintero.—The one scene made for speed and economy, whilst the colour, comedy and vitality appealed to all tastes in the audience.

A charade guessing entertainment in July gave scope both for various members of the Drama Committee who undertook the production and for numerous Institute members who performed.

We have entered for the National Festival of Community Drama, for which we are working at Harold Chapin's fable, "Dropping the Baby."

M. M. LOWENTHAL,
Chairman & Producer.

BROMLEY COMMON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE DRAMATIC CLASS (KENT)

During the last year we have lost two good members—one through illness, one through press of work. We have thus been reduced to a company of twelve, and find it rather difficult to cast our plays—parts must be doubled.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

We played "The Taming of the Shrew" as a garden show last summer, a judge visiting us in connection with the West Kent W.I. Drama Festival at Lullingstone Castle, where we afterwards played a chosen scene.

In September we began rehearsing "The School for Scandal" under Miss B. Moses, and two successful performances were given in the Village Hall. A scene was also played at the local Musical Festival, and gained 80 marks (max. 100), and a prize certificate.

The population of the village is about 3,000, and the membership of the W.I. is 82.

BYWELL W.I.D.S. (NORTHUMBERLAND)

The Bywell Women's Institute Drama Section was formed in April 1931, with fifteen members. Two garden performances of scenes from "As You Like It" were given in August.

A farce, "Apartments to Let" and a sketch, "The Artistic Touch," were performed at the first birthday party of the Institute in December. Short sketches have also been given by members during the social half-hour at the monthly meetings of the Institute.

Several of our members attended a holiday class for voice production arranged during September.

LOIS G. YOUNG,
Convenor.

THE CAMBERWELL AND LAMBETH RANGER DRAMATIC SOCIETY (LONDON)

The Camberwell and Lambeth Ranger Dramatic Society was formed in January 1931, and consists of twelve Rangers' Companies in Camberwell and Lambeth under the Presidency of Miss Lee Baker, Division Commissioner for Lambeth.

The Festival was held among the Companies on March 21st and 23rd, and the play chosen, "The Happy Man." All the companies entered and a most interesting and exciting contest took place under the adjudication of Miss Oulless of the V.D.S. The 3rd Stockwell Company were awarded the Shield, the 11th Peckham Rye being placed second and the 4th W. Dulwich third. Subsequently two successful public performances of "The Happy Man," together with a topical curtain raiser were given by the Society in May.

In November the Society had a most interesting lecture by Miss Mary Kelly, on Dramatic Technique.

P. M. FAIRBAIRNS.

CLEOBURY MORTIMER WOMEN'S INSTITUTE DRAMATIC SOCIETY (SALOP)

In February 1931, at the monthly meeting we presented a W.I. charade which roped in most of the members. We competed at the Drama Festival in Shrewsbury on June 4th, in "Sally Sees it Through," and obtained a second-class certificate in the elementary section—the critic remarking that the cast were worthy of a better play.

Number of members in Society, thirteen.

CLOUGHTON VILLAGE PLAYERS (YORKS)

We continued our system of playing only village comedies, specially made for us always by the resident author, R. A. H. Goodyear. People expect an evening's laughter from us, and in "School for Three" and

"Hunt the Ruby" (a farcical mystery play), we have given them what they most revel in. We have 18 young players, drawn from a village of 496 inhabitants. Two of the cleverest dialect performers are still at school. The money raised for charities and clubs by our home-made plays since 1925 now exceeds £8,000—rather an amazing record for a little seaside village. Other societies apply to us for plays and we have provided the Scarborough Jubilee Players with "Plain English," a new three-act drama, and the Scarborough Columbus Players with a new full-length farce called "Mullion's Millions," which they will perform 40 times this season.

EMERALD ACLAND,
Hon. Sec.

COBHAM AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY (KENT)

The programme for our Annual Entertainment in November seemed almost too ambitious after we had cast it and begun to rehearse, for the General Election came along and took so many of our members to their political activities that at one time we felt we should never have a show at all. Anyhow, the Election passed, and we settled down to tremendously hard work, which resulted in a performance said by some members of our audience to be the best we have so far presented. We gave 3 one-act plays. "Tyranny and Tea-cakes," by O. Popplewell; "The 'Ole in the Road," by Sea-mark, and "The Monkey's Paw," by W. W. Jacobs. The second half of the programme was taken up with W. Graham Robertson's adaption of David Garrick's "Miss in her Teens." This delightful play was so well dressed by the V.D.S. that someone remarked that it should have been filmed.

We are now at work on our Pantomime, "Babes in the Wood" to be presented on January 6th, 7th and 8th.

W. J. WOOD,
Hon. Sec.

CONSTANTINE PAVILION PLAYERS (CORNWALL)

As this is our first instalment in the February number of DRAMA, we think it would be very fitting to give a resumé of the above society from its inception. About the middle of 1929, it was decided to form a Dramatic Society, the name chosen being as above. Up to the present we have staged the following:—

Xmas 1929, three short plays:—"Ici on Parle Français," by Thomas J. Williams; "The Chimney Corner," by H. T. Craven; "Turn Him Out," by Thomas J. Williams.

Easter 1930, "The Farmer's Wife," by Eden Phillips.

Xmas 1930, "Hawleys of the High Street," by Walter W. Ellis.

Easter 1931, "The Thirteenth Chair," by Bayard Veiller.

Xmas 1931, "Our Bessie," by R. A. H. Goodyear. All have been well patronised, and if we are to go by the reports to hand, we have every reason to be fully confident to go ahead.

The Society are most fortunate in possessing such a fine and capable producer as Dr. T. W. Walker, and we might say here, that we are all very proud of

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

our "skipper" and realise to the full, that there can be only one skipper to one ship and what he says goes, which we think we can say without contradiction is the secret of the success of the Society.

IVAN C. TREE,
HENRY SANDERS,
Joint Secretaries.

CRICK W.I. DRAMATIC SOCIETY (NORTHANTS)

Last summer we performed the "Bakehouse," and repeated it at Castle Ashby at the County Federation Rally, also at Long Buckby. In the Northamptonshire Area Drama Festival we played Scenes I and II, Act III, from "Hamlet," obtaining 78 points,—judge, Mr. Edward Lewis.

On January 1st we had two successful performances of four short plays—"The Card Party," (Cranford), "Tyranny and Tea-cakes," "At the Gate," "The Dear Departed." The last two had men in the cast. We have been asked to repeat several plays in other villages.

At the Annual Meeting in Northampton we suggested that there should be a class for mixed teams in the Drama Festival.

A lecture on "Clothes for Acting" is being given by Lady Henly in March.

Our population is 650, the Women's Institute numbers 70, and we have 21 acting members.

A. HOWELL,
Producer.

THE DATCHWORTH PLAYERS (HERTS)

This little company is strengthening its foundations, although we have not much to show as dramatic work during the past year. In April we entered "The Spinners of Lushet" for the Herts Rural Community Council Competition, and were much helped and encouraged by the expert criticism then given. Some of us have taken part in, or helped to organise, a Nativity Play, which has been presented in our Village Church this Christmas. We have about sixteen playing members, eight of whom are adults, and a good number of non-playing members. Our producer attended the Drama School held at Cirencester in October, and returned with a store of fresh ideas, and a deeper understanding of the value that Village Drama can have in Village Life.

E. GREGORY,
Hon. Sec.

DARVEL AMATEUR PLAYERS (AYRSHIRE)

At the beginning of the year the Players performed "A Damsel in Distress" by P. G. Wodehouse, and entered "The Man in the Bowler Hat," (A. A. Milne), for the Scottish Community Drama Festival in February.

In June they were engaged in an outdoor presentation of "The Merchant of Venice."

This winter the Club has unexpectedly lost several of its most useful members, and the production of "The Admirable Crichton," (J. M. Barrie), for which rehearsals were well advanced, has had to be postponed. The settings had already been constructed and painted by the players themselves. Rehearsals have begun for the production in March of "Cock Robin," by Elmer Rice and Philip Barry.

During the past four months most of the members of the Club have attended a Class in Dramatic Art held under the auspices of the Education Committee of the County Council of Ayrshire.

DOLLAR DRAMATIC CLUB, CLUCKMANNAN-SHIRE

In April last the Club produced three one-act plays "The Guinea's Stamp," "C'est la Guerre," and "The New Poor." At the opening meeting of the current session, Mr. W. G. Fay, Producer to the Scottish Players, gave a most useful lecture on the problems confronting small dramatic societies. Last month the Club produced "The Lovely Miracle," "The Scarecrow," and "Buying a Gun," and the proceeds were devoted to charity. It is intended to produce a 3-act play in the spring.

The population of Dollar is about 1,500, and the membership of the Club, 65.

T. R. NASH,
Hon. Sec.

FERNHURST W.I. (SURREY)

During the past year the Fernhurst Women's Institute Players, helped by men friends, gave performances of "The Mock-beggar" and "Mr. Sampson." The latter play was repeated by request for the benefit of the local branch of the British Legion.

Fernhurst is a village of about 500 population and lies half-way between Haslemere and Midhurst.

There is a good Village Hall but we lack a producer. Is there anyone in the district who would help us?

FRAMLINGHAM CASTLE PAGEANT (SUFFOLK) JULY, 1931.

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY MR. & MRS. HERBERT HUDSON.

Judging from the financial success of this Pageant and from the intense interest taken in it by the performers, few of whom had ever dressed up before in their quiet Country lives, there is no reason why anyone should fear to produce a Pageant even in these hard times. There were 700 performers, each had two parts, thereby providing 1,400 characters. The Hon. Producers who had sole charge of every detail in connection with costumes and properties up to the moment when they were handed over to a Professional Stage Manager, found that it was far more interesting, and that greater Historic accuracy could be achieved by improvising designs instead of relying on the Theatrical outfitters. The bulk of the material used was casement cloth and saten; cut and tone being the most important considerations.

THE FRESHFORD PLAYERS (SOMERSET)

Last spring "The Cheerful Knave" by Keble Howard was given with great success.

In the autumn "Gerard" was given, a five-act play adapted from Charles Reade's novel "The Cloister and the Hearth" by Vivian Ritson, one of the Freshford Players who besides producing the play, painted and arranged the scenery. The cast numbered 18, and the 15th century costumes were made in Freshford.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

This proved a great success and was much appreciated by both the village audience and later a town audience at Bradford-on-Avon.

This is the first time the players have produced a play written by one of themselves.

As the population of Freshford only numbers 500 and our band of players about 20, we may well be rather proud that this play went so well, many saying it is our best production up to date.

R. H. SPENCER EDWARDS,
Hon. Secretary.

THE GODSTONE DRAMATIC CLUB (SURREY)

The Godstone Dramatic Club have done very little this year, the only production being two scenes from "Henry VIII"—Katharine's Trial and her death-bed scene—These were played by women only at a women's Club meeting and again at a Women's Club Social at a neighbouring village.

Although "The Private Secretary" was rehearsed all the winter under a man-producer for various reasons it did not reach the production stage.

Nothing has yet been planned for this year.

THE HADLOW VILLAGE PLAYERS (KENT)

The Hadlow Village Players came into being in 1930 and, during that year, produced one play only ("The Rotters").

1931 has shown a growing membership roll and an increased interest in the activities of the society. Fortnightly play-readings are held at which there is usually a good attendance. In March we staged Noel Coward's "I'll Leave it to You," and in October "Lord Richard in the Pantry."

The population of our village is about 2,500. The acting membership of the H.V.P. is 9 men and 10 women and, in addition to these a number of non-acting members are regular attendants at the play-readings.

LLYWELYN W. MADDOCK,
Hon. Sec.

HARBOTTLE GIRLS DRAMATIC CLUB (NORTHUMBERLAND)

Our Dramatic Club has had a busy and successful year. We have produced the following plays:—Shakespeare's "As You Like It," Act I, Sc. 2 and 3. A. Monkhouse's "O Death, where is thy Sting." F. A. Hyde's "A Bit of Help." These were all given in the village and also at the W.I. Drama Festival at the People's Theatre, Newcastle. We were fortunate in having scenery specially painted for us by Mr. T. F. Dunn, late of Howard and Wyndham's Theatres. The Members also took part in the Northumberland W.I. Pageant of Border Ballads at Blagdon Hall, "Jock o' the Syde" being the song-story performed by them.

The population of our district is only 150 and we have 14 performing members.

Thanks to the kindness of Mr. Fenwicke-Clennell, the New Hall has been converted into a small theatre, with stage, drop-curtain, scenery, foot-lights, etc.

Valuable assistance has been rendered by Mr. T. F. Dunn and Mr. Hearfield, both of whom have had long experience in the production of plays.

HARLESTONE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE DRAMATIC SOCIETY (NORTHANTS)

1931. During the year we have acted "Chin-Chin" and "Sympathy" (by W. G. Hill), a short play for seven women and two children.

Harlestone entered for the Area and final Dramatic Festival of the Northamptonshire Women's Institute Federation, and eighteen members took part in two scenes from "Henry VI," for which both costumes, and properties, (falcons, etc.), were made by members.

HASFIELD PLAYERS (GLOS.)

The Hasfield Players only came into existence in September this year, and at present consist of eight members. We have successfully performed "Mechanical Jane" and "Moggeridge's Cow" to Institutes and village audiences. We have none of us had any experience whatever of the stage or of production, and the performers consist of members of my household and farmers' sons. The population of the entire village is only 180. We have had to learn to make up by the light of nature and though the results are better than nothing and sometimes amusing, they leave much to be desired. Where can we learn to make up? Next year we want to be more ambitious and give a play that will last about an hour or more and include all our cast.

HEMPSTEAD W.I. (GLOS.)

The dramatic section of the Hempstead Women's Institute is only in its infancy as yet. Members fluctuate too, and make it none too easy to give good team work. However, we have a small basis of reliable folk and for these give thanks.

In these parts the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council sponsor dramatic efforts and organise an annual Drama Festival at Cheltenham.

Our first try-out was twelve months ago at the W.I. Christmas Party, just to see how members proved themselves. Next, we entered at the Cheltenham Festival, only to receive very salutary criticism and trenchant remarks on our play. But—being tough-skinned we are entering again next April, our play not yet chosen; but probably an original.

HILLINGTON PARK CHURCH DRAMATIC SOCIETY (CARDONALD PLAYERS) (GLASGOW)

During the year we have produced two plays, namely:—"The Professor's Love Story," by Sir J. M. Barrie, and "A Damsel in Distress," by Ian Hay and P. G. Wodehouse.

We are in the fortunate position of having had greater demand for accommodation than we have been able to meet.

In the past it has been our practice to enter one or two teams for the Annual Community Drama Festival, but on this occasion we are not competing on account of our having definitely abandoned the production of one-act plays.

A. T. ROY,
Hon. Sec.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

HOUGHTON-ON-THE-HILL W.I. DRAMATIC CLASS (LEICESTERSHIRE)

Our membership for this year was much smaller, having only nine members, but we did quite a good year's work. In February we produced two plays which were entered in the Loughborough Rural Community Council Drama Festival. These were "The Singing Soul" and "Banns of Marriage," and were very well received. "The Singing Soul" was quite the best thing we have ever done, and we only just missed getting into the finals of the Festival: we were placed fifth on the list. In May, some of the younger members gave "Early Birds" at a concert, and in June "The Banns of Marriage" was again produced at the Leicestershire and Rutland County Federation Rally. In December we again entered for the L.R.C.C. Festival with "The Spinners of Lush" and "Tyranny and Tea-cakes"; these were played to a very appreciative audience. We had a course of six lectures by a L.R.C.C. lecturer which we much enjoyed. The population of our village is about 400.

E. DAVIS,
Hon. Secretary.

THE HORSHAM DISTRICT GIRL GUIDES (SURREY)

Ten companies are affiliated and last February arranged a course of lectures to be held in Horsham on Simple Production.

The course of lectures by Miss Janet Scrutton was well attended by Guides and others, who much appreciated all the help and advice thus gained.

On November 7th the District produced the Amber Gate Pageant with 135 characters. It was a great success and much enjoyed by large audiences. The actors were greatly helped by dress sent by the V.D.S. and by advice as to costumes and making-up.

HUTTON RUDBY W.I. (YORKS.)

This branch entered for the Yorkshire Drama Competitions in connection with the W.I. and produced the one-act play "The Black Horseman" and were successful in gaining a second class certificate. The adjudicator was Miss Esme Church.

Several members attended the Drama School which was held at Stokesley, special interest was taken in the lecture on miming, the members are now very keen on this subject and produced a mime play at the monthly meeting of the Institute.

The population of the village is 924.

M. WEIGHELL,
Hon. Secretary.

THE ICKENHAM PLAYERS (MIDDLESEX)

Apart from the production of 4 one-act plays in January 1931, no serious work was done until the Autumn, when "The Lilies of the Field" was put into rehearsal. This play was very successfully produced at the Village Hall on December 5th.

In addition to producing a further 3-act play in April next, it is hoped to arrange monthly meetings for reading and discussions, and it has been suggested that microphone readings would make excellent training, besides being more interesting than the "straight" type. This matter is being considered.

With Membership at about 25, and a dearth of young talent, production is not easy, but new members are coming forward, and it is felt that the Society's future is assured. Accommodation is a great difficulty.

JOHN LONGDEN,
Hon. Secretary.

KELLY DRAMATIC SOCIETY (DEVON)

Population under 240. Members—men 24, women 22, children 12, total 58. For our Ascension Day play this year we tackled a very difficult but most interesting play, "The World and the Child," a 16th Century Morality, edited by John Hampden. It was acted in the Barn.

In the Autumn we entered two plays at the Tavistock Dramatic Festival in December. They were "Nothing but His Due," by Norah Kelly (a most beautiful little play thoroughly appreciated by our own village audience and the Tavistock audience) and "A Village Jumble," by V. Bannisdale. We won 2nd class certificate for both plays.

We had to produce three plays without a producer as Mrs. Lester, who has so very kindly helped us during the last two years was taken ill, and could no longer produce for us.

Dorothea Kelly,
Hon. Sec.

KEMPSEY W.I. (WORCESTERSHIRE)

Kempsey W.I. affiliated to the V.D.S. in February, 1931. Our Drama Class entered for the County Competition in the "Casket Scene" from the "Merchant of Venice"; they obtained 2nd place; the clothes were hired from the V.D.S., and were much admired. Our village is a scattered one of about 1,500 inhabitants, including some 20 gentlemen's houses; our Drama class numbers 16. This year they are giving "Honest Folk," and "Footsteps," to raise money for our funds.

E. S.

KENSWORTH JUNIOR DRAMATIC SOCIETY (BEDS.)

Kensworth—2 miles from Whipsnade Zoo on the Herts. and Beds. border. Population 500. Natural occupation of the people, agriculture, but almost entirely industrialised by Luton. The present society has developed from a children's country dance party. Plays have been acted during the last 2 years in aid of the Kensworth Women's Institute, but the present Dramatic Group only date from August 1931—Before then several children's plays have been given:—"Seeing and Believing," "The Happy Man," and "The Magic Word." On November 20th "Bearskin" and "Fortunatio and Cassandra" were given, with great success. The children (ages 9—15, but we hope to get members up to 18) pay 1s. subscription—6d on joining and 4d. weekly. Membership 13; 10 girls and 3 boys.

Producer:—Mrs. G. Todhunter, "Kensworth," Dunstable, Beds.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

THE LANDBEACH PLAYERS (CAMBS.)

Our Society commenced the year with a social during which we gave "Erb and Emma" and "The Registry Office." As we have not a hall in the village where we can produce plays we gave three readings "The Monkey's Paw," "The Dear Departed," and scenes from "The Merchant of Venice."

On April 9th we hired a hall in the next village and produced "The Grand Chanis Diamond," "Between the Soup and the Savoury," and "Double Demon"—These were very successful.

On July 2nd we gave "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the Rectory Garden—we made all costumes with the exception of Puck. This was a great success, and as it was our first big production we were very satisfied with the result.

We are now rehearsing "The Old Game" for the County Drama Competition to be held in Cambridge in April.

L. A. ABRAHAM,
Hon. Sec.

LANGCLIFFE MILLS RECREATION CLUB DRAMATIC SECTION (YORKS.)

The Dramatic Section has had a successful year. In March we produced "The Man in the Bowler Hat" at the Drama Festival of the Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers' Ass., Ltd. Last November we gave two performances of "Plain English," by R. A. H. Goodyear, it was well done and much appreciated by cast and audience.

Owing to the distance from a town, none of our members have attended lectures or classes.

We have 160 members, but only about 20 take part in plays.

We are looking forward to 1932 being another equally successful year.

JOHN WILCOCK,
Hon. Secretary.

LAUNCESTON (CORNWALL)

"The Pageant of Launceston," written and produced by Miss Mary Kelly was the great event of Launceston's history, 1931. The scenes, spanning 800 years, 1089 to 1862, were portrayed in the Castle Grounds, the Castle towering in the background and the two gateways making wonderfully picturesque frames for entrances and exits. Some 400 performers, all drawn from the neighbourhood, played their parts with zest and understanding and the whole thing was really alive. Tragedy prevailed in Scenes I and III, the rule of Count Robert of Normandy, 1089, and the Cornish Rebellion of 1549; pure comedy in Scene II, the visit of the Black Prince, 1343; comedy with a hint of pathos in Scene IV, Sir Richard Grenville and the Prince, 1646, perhaps the most spectacular scene, but the most popular was Scene V, the coming of the Railway, the memory of which event still lingered in the minds of the older people and which was celebrated with such wild hilarity and enthusiasm by otherwise staid bewhiskered and crinolined Victorian men and women. A triumphant ending to a pageant which has itself become a part of Launceston's history.

LITTLE BADDOW (ESSEX) ST. ROGER'S FOLK

During 1931, St. Roger's Folk, in common with many other Drama Companies in Essex, has been hampered by the licensing regulations, severely stringent for village halls. The company has nevertheless performed in various places with success. "David Garrick," "Bella's Boffins" (an adaption of "Our Mutual Friend") and a variety show "In Hyde Park," written by a member. St. Roger's Folk took a high place, as far as Essex was concerned, in the National Competition. Members have helped in Sierra's "Cradle Song" and in "A Spectacle of the Evolution of English Drama," and with lectures on "Production," in many parts of the country.

The population of Little Baddow is above 300. The company has 12 members.

NANCY & GREGORY NICHOLSON.

LITTLE DOWNHAM (CAMBS.) LEAGUE OF YOUTH DRAMATIC SOCIETY

Population of village, about 1,000, and 1,000 in the fens.

This newly-formed Society consists entirely of about 20 young people (under 25) chiefly Rangers, Rover Scouts, and Guides. Since affiliating last January, 1931, we have produced, at a Village XIV Century Faire, "A Stolen Spell" which gave great amusement to players and audience. We have helped in Waif and Stray Pageant in Ely and been responsible for the last scenes. The Rangers have acted scenes from "Pride and Prejudice," the Guides a silent Cinema. For 8 years we have produced a Nativity Play, and this year did the "Xmas Message to the Shepherds" and "The Annunciation" followed by Margaret Cropper's play, "The Next-door House." We are hoping to visit the Festival Theatre in Cambridge and to rehearse "The Happy Man" for Easter. We also gave the farce "Jacob Carter" on December 31st, at a Social Evening.

(Mrs.) W. A. STALLARD.

LITTLE MARLOW AND BOURNE END W.I. (BUCKS.) DRAMA SECTION

Out of a total of 130 members of this branch, 24 belong to the Drama Section. Early last year Mrs. Trice Martin who had done very much to stimulate interest in Dramatic Art, was unfortunately obliged to give up her work and Mrs. Hemming was chosen to take her place as Producer.

In March a Triple Bill was given at the Village Hall, consisting of (1) "Aunt Matilda's Collar," (2), "Legend," (Philip Johnson), (3), "The School for Scandal," Act II, Sc. 2, (Sheridan), and on the following day the company took the last item to compete at the County Drama Festival at Aylesbury—where they were fortunate enough to come out bracketed 3rd, and win a Challenge Picture for the best Classical Play. They hope to give a performance of "Every Woman," (C. M. Wilson), at the Women's Institute Christmas Party on January 8th.

Ten members attended and much enjoyed the Drama School at High Wycombe in October.

LINA HEMMING.

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

LITTLE WALTHAM PLAYERS (ESSEX)

Population of village 750-800.

On May 30th the above Society presented "King Bulbous," a musical comedy published by Novello, in the Rectory Gardens—Two performances were given during the day—and the play was subsequently given at Great Waltham in aid of their Scout Troop.—Eleven men and 16 women took part, with 6 children who took the part of fairies. This was the first time for many years that a musical play had been attempted in the village—Folk-dances were incorporated in the performance, and were specially approved. The outstanding fact from the producer's point of view was the keenness and "sportsmanship" of the understudies, who were always "on the spot" and ready.

In June, the Players took part in the Langleys "Spectacle," a pageant of English Drama, promoted by the Essex County Drama Society; Little Waltham being responsible for "The Prose of the Ass."

On December 21st they are giving the Christmas Story in Mime—the Village Choir helping with hymns and carols—and on January 8th they hope to do a short pantomime "Cinderella."

H. G. GAYFORD,
Producer.

LLANFAIRFECHAN AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY (CARNARVON)

This Society performed a 4-act play "Hobson's Choice," on April 15th, 1931, at a Matinee and Evening performance in aid of the Cancer Fund. The Society has twenty members and the population of the village is 3,400. On December 9th and 10th they performed 3 one-act plays namely, "The Price of Coal" (Harold Brighouse), "Riders to the Sea" (Synge), and "The Grey Parrot" by W. W. Jacobs and Charles Rock. The Producer is Mr. D. Samuel, School House, Llanfairfechan. President, Rev. M. R. Smith; Vice-President, Mrs. Ida North; Stage Managers, Mr. W. Knight and Mr. Walter Barker; Chairman, Mr. W. Roberts, and Lighting Operator, Mr. A. Pugh. On December 10th also, the Society presented their former Chairman, Rev. J. W. Evans, B.A., Minor Canon of Bangor,—with an enlarged photograph of the Society. This Society, founded in 1929 by the Producer, has acted also "The Bull," "The Bishop's Candlesticks," and "Two Blind Men and a Donkey." The Publicity Secretary is Mrs. Edwards, Fair View, Llanfairfechan.

MADDERTY GUILD PLAYERS (PERTHSHIRE)

This society has about twenty young enthusiastic members. They have already produced successfully a number of Scottish one-act plays. This year they are studying four plays, and have entered for the Scottish Drama Festival, where they are to produce two plays, viz.—"Rory Aforesaid" and "The Auction Mart." The producer is Mr. R. Ironside, Schoolhouse, Madderty, who has supervised the productions during the past three years. One member attended the Drama School at St. Andrews this year, and was full of praise for the help received there.

ROBERT IRONSIDE,
Secretary.

MEAVY VILLAGE DRAMA SOCIETY (DEVON)

Plays acted in 1931: March—"The Shepherds, Outside the Gate." June—"The Pixy's Plot," (children). October—"Here Lies Matilda." December, annual performance—"Here Lies Matilda," "Scarlet Mantle," "A Meeting at Zoyland."

For the evening of religious drama we studied illustrations in good biblical works. All costumes and properties were supplied or made by the Company. The Children's play, an original one, had a local interest and was acted out of doors. At the Tavistock Festival we received a first class certificate for "Zoyland," and a second for "The Scarlet Mantle." We found this play more difficult than the village plays but the members worked very hard and made it one of our most successful attempts.

For our last show we tried electric lighting run from cars. This was found a great improvement to our lamps previously used.

Two of our members went to the Drama School at Cirencester in the autumn and their experience has helped our production this winter.

At present we are reading "The Winter's Tale."
W. WONNACOTT,
Hon. Sec.

MEIFOD (MONTGOMERYSHIRE) A.D.S.

Last winter the Society gave two successful performances of "Tilly of Bloomsbury." It was decided to revert this winter to a costume comedy, as this type of play seems to be more popular with the local audience and players. The play chosen was "Miss in Her Teens." Unfortunately we have had to give up the idea of presenting it this winter, but hope that next winter will again find us behind the footlights.

The number of members is 14. The population of this village is only about 200 but it is in the centre of a fairly large agricultural district and our audiences are always augmented by parties from neighbouring villages.

W. M. WILLIAMS.

THE MINCHINHAMPTON DRAMATIC SOCIETY (GLOS.)

The Minchinhampton Dramatic Society was formed five years ago, not with the idea of helping charity, but to promote an enthusiasm among its members, for improving the standard of their acting, and to give pleasure to the people of M. Hampton. Commencing with one show a year, the Society are now able to give two new performances in Minchinhampton every season, in addition to performing in neighbouring villages when called upon. Among the most popular plays performed mention must be made of the following. "The Bishop's Candlesticks," "Master Wayfars," "The Old Lady Shows her Medals," and "The Comedy of the Man Who Married a Dumb Wife," the latter play being greatly enhanced by the beautiful costumes from the Village Drama Society. All these plays were produced by Mr. George Romans of Gloucester.

A short while ago the Society visited Bristol to see Mr. Matheson Lang in the play "Jew Suss."

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MONKTON FARLEIGH (WILTS.)

During the past year two events have to be recorded in connection with this branch, neither of them very ambitious, but, being recently started, it was thought best to ascertain what local talent could be found available for the future. Early in the year the old, but amusing Comedy entitled "Domestic Economy" was staged, followed by "Sally Sees it Through." Two, at least of those taking part showed exceptional talent though new to the stage. Just before Christmas a short Nativity Play by Margaret Cropper was given in the Church in connection with a Carol Service. With the exception of the two angels, there were no speaking parts, but the performers filled their roles with great reverence and the costumes, etc., were most realistic. A very large attendance of parishioners contributed by their close attention to an impressive representation. Mrs. M. F. Hall, assisted by the Rector, was responsible for the carrying out of the above.

The population of the village is 338, entirely agricultural. Mrs. Hall attended the School of Religious Drama held at Salisbury in June last.

REV. M. F. HALL.

MOUNT TABOR (SHEFFIELD) BRANCH

Despite the financial depression we are able to report that we have had a very successful year. In March we produced a new play, "The Jester," written by a local author, Mr. W. Cuthbertson. Being a first production, it was naturally more difficult to produce than a play that has been done before, but with the assistance of the author we were able to give a polished production. For this play we were able to bring into action a small three colour lighting system made by our staging staff and the results obtained were most beautiful. Needless to say, the equipment is now being enlarged.

In October, an adaption of Moliere's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" was successfully presented and at Christmas we gave our usual performance at the school children's treat. The majority of the dresses for all the shows were obtained from the Costume Department and we have gained a local reputation for the beauty of the costuming.

NETTLECOMBE PLAYERS (SOM.)

Nettlecombe has no village, no inn, no shop and no post-office, and all performances have to take place in the school where a stage and curtains have to be put up for each occasion. The Nettlecombe Players, in a play by their Producer, ("That three Dog," by Phoebe M. Rees) reached the finals of the Somerset Village Drama Festival for 1931, and were runners up for the Trevilian Cup. They also had the honour of broadcasting that play. The players work with the Nettlecombe W.I. Drama Society under the same producer and later they acted the "play scene" from "Midsummer Night's Dream" which they entered for the County W.I. Drama Festival. The members have just started rehearsing a play with a mediæval setting which has been translated from the French for their special benefit. They have had a talk on Drama by Miss Carritt, and their producer has attended classes on voice production and stage management. The total membership for the two Societies is sixteen.

THE NEW BARKBY W.I. PLAYERS (LEICS.)

The New Barkby W.I. Players have had an interesting and busy year. In January they presented "Three Women" by G. Dearmer, and Act I of the "Farmer's Wife," by Eden Philpotts, for the Leicestershire R.C.C. Festival and the former one-act play was given for the B.D.L. Festival in Leicester. In March, performances were given of "A Troubled Conscience," by E. Baumer Williams, "The Man Who Thought of Everything," by E. N. Taylor, and "The Mock-beggar," by Sheila Kaye-Smith. Rehearsals are now being held of "The Man Who Wouldn't go to Heaven," by F. Sladen-Smith; "Wayside War," by Margaret Napier and an original play dramatised by one of our members from the short story "The Ebony Box," by A. E. W. Mason, for competition this season. One of our Producers attended the Norwich School and the B.D.L. Conference at Hull, and we are fortunate in having a course of Lectures on the Drama by Mr. Harry Letts, through the Adult Education Department of Loughborough College.

FREDA M. ARGRAVE,
Hon. Secretary.

NORTHENDEN AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY (CHESHIRE)

The N.A.D.S. is a village society numbering some 250 members, 50 of them being on the acting list.

The season 1930-31 was opened by a social evening for members.

Two plays were given for charity; "Her Shop," at the Manchester College of Domestic Economy, in aid of the "Babes Hospital Cot," for which £52 3s. was raised, and "Clothes and the Woman," in aid of the Northenden District Nursing Association, net profit, £28.

"The Fake" was performed in January 1931, and was followed by "If Four Walls Told," a fairly successful attempt at Cornish dialect. The season concluded on a phantastic note by the performance of "Mrs. Moonlight," given for members only.

"The Fake" was also given for the Altrincham Garrick Society.

In November the N.A.D.S. gave an evening for the Northenden Literary Society, which included a "Radio Drama" play written by a member of the society.

A few members attended a one-day school promoted by the Stockport Garrick Society.

Much interest was excited by a series of make-up classes.

About 50 new members were enrolled during this highly successful season.

NORTHOLT A.D.S. (MIDDLESEX)

My society is handicapped by its hall's seating capacity being limited to 70. This has necessitated strict economy in order to make ends meet, and non-royalty plays—chiefly one-act—have been our only hope. However, by making a small profit of a pound or two on several performances of this nature, funds have been accumulated to warrant an attempt on a better class play of 3-acts during the coming year. After

REPORTS FROM V.D.S. BRANCHES

this it will, presumably, be necessary to repeat the cycle, in order to save up for another royalty play.

Our playing strength is about a dozen members—half of each sex.

The population of the village is roughly, 3-4,000.

F. C. H. WITCOMBE,
Hon. Secretary.

THE PAINSWICK PLAYERS (GLOS.)

The Painswick Players are a Community Group in a village of about 900 inhabitants.

On March 5th, 1931, we gave two short plays, together with "The Jackdaw of Rheims" done in Mime by the Painswick Girl Guides. Our plays were "Joan the Maid," by Hermon Ould, and "Michael," by Miles Malleson. The last named was a last year's production repeated by special request, and it was again greatly appreciated. We also entered the Glos. R.C.C. Drama Festival at Cheltenham with "Michael," and won a Gold Star. "Joan the Maid," and "Michael," with our string Orchestra were also taken to North Cerney on April 9th, and gave a performance in their Village Hall.

In the summer we did Gilbert's "Creatures of Impulse" at the R.C.C. Fete at Cheltenham in June, and repeated it on two other occasions. We have other plays in rehearsal now to be given early in 1932.

One of our members attended the whole of the Drama School at Cirencester, and several others went over for lectures, etc.

LUCY C. HYETT.

PICKERING W.I. (YORKS.)

Success in the Yorkshire Federation W.I. Dramatic Competitions has been the outstanding feature of the Pickering W.I. dramatic efforts this year.

An all-women's team secured the Shakespeare Challenge Cup with a fine performance of scenes from "The Taming of the Shrew," for which they were awarded 95 marks. The adjudicator, Miss Esme Church, characterised the production as excellent.

In the class for Modern Plays, 91 marks, and a first-class certificate were awarded to our W.I. players, again an all-women's caste; for "The Ship Comes In," a Yorkshire dialect play by F. Austin Hyde, M.A. here again the adjudicator was very complimentary in her comments.

A dramatic entertainment was given, in the Memorial Hall, in November, when these plays were repeated, and were greatly appreciated. The Harome W.I. Players also contributed three short plays with which they had obtained successes in the Yorks. Federation competition.

M. A. DINSLEY,
Press Representative.

THE PLOMESGATE DRAMATIC SOCIETY (SUFFOLK)

On February 12th, the Plomesgate Players gave a performance of Eden Philpott's play, "The Farmer's Wife" at Saxmundham in aid of a local charity. The Hall was crowded. By request it was repeated at Thorpness on September 3rd and 4th. At Saxmundham on November 19th, again in aid of a local charity, Galsworthy's "Silver Box" was presented at a Matinee and an evening performance. We have had one very

interesting and very helpful lecture on voice control given by Mrs. Maxwell Wray, wife of the Producer at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham. Our Present membership numbers 16.

THE PONTELAND PLAYERS (NORTHUMBERLAND)

The Ponteland Players commenced their year by giving a play at the W.I. Annual Social, the play being called "Footprints," a story from the French Revolution. In February, as an entertainment at the monthly meeting, they gave a sketch, "A Bit of Help," and in April produced "The Village Wedding" to a crowded audience in the Memorial Hall. The play was a real success, the costumes being very spectacular. The proceeds from the show have carried us through the year, and a balance left for W.I. funds. For the President's Garden Party in July, two scenes from Shakespeare's "As You Like It" was very effectively given, the setting being the beautiful old-world garden. This completed our year's work for 1931.

D. IONS,
Secretary.

POOLEY BRIDGE DRAMATIC SOCIETY (CAMBS.)

This society continues to flourish in a modest way, but, though members leave for various reasons, new and enthusiastic applicants for admission keep up our numbers. We gave a performance in aid of the Y.M.C.A. on March 6th; acted in a competition at Clyton on March 24th, and acted an open-air dialect play on July 23rd.

Pooley Bridge has a population of 84 persons and therefore we draw much of our personnel from outlying farms. We are unable to enlist any male performers. We hope to resume work now that the summer interruptions are over; in the tourist season little can be done.

E. E. COMPTON,
Hon. Secretary.

PORTWILLIAM (WIGTOWNSHIRE)

The local Amateur Dramatic Society was founded several years before the war. Its annual production has always been looked forward to and much enjoyed by the inhabitants of the village and the surrounding district. The membership is usually about 20, the number of males predominating. Several have taken part in the Dramatic Festivals and one lady has attended classes conducted by Mr. Fay. Since the complete re-organisation of the society eight years ago, plays of a much higher standard have been produced most successfully and the level of the acting and stage settings has been raised considerably.

Among the plays the society has recently produced are "The Private Secretary," "Tons of Money," "Hobson's Choice," "Eliza Comes to Stay," "Tilly of Bloomsbury," "Are You a Mascot," etc., etc. This year the members are busy with the Scotch Comedy, "Hunky Dory."

The office bearers are:—President, Dr. Selby; Vice-Presidents, J. C. Ferguson, Esq., M. McGeoch, Esq.; Hon. Sec. and Treas., Miss Jesson; Producer, J. P. Kinnear, Esq.



SCENE FROM "THE OLD LADY SHOWS
HER MEDALS." WOODHORN AND
NEWBIGGIN WOMENS INSTITUTE.



SCENE FROM "THE CAT & THE CANARY"
WARLINGHAM. A.D.S.

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THE PORTISHEAD PLAYERS

The population of the village is about 4,000. Our membership is in the region of 290.

So far this season we have produced "The Lilies of the Field," "The Roof," and "The Thirteenth Chair." For the latter half of the season we have "The Tide," "Ambrose Applejohn's Adventure," and "The Mariners."

At the beginning of the season we had a lecture on Production by Miss Radford of Citizen House and some of us made a rather bedraggled effort to attend their Summer School. The great question, as far as we are concerned, is "ROYALTIES." Our Hall holds only about 180 and to have to pay Five Guineas per night is hitting us very hard and will, I am afraid, hamper our activities in the future.

REGINALD A. S. HEAVEN,
Hon. Secretary.

POYNTON DRAMATIC SOCIETY (CHESHIRE)

Last March this Society produced "You Never Can Tell" by G.B.S., which was quite a success, and very well received by the audience. A programme was drawn up for the present season, which included "Joy," by John Galsworthy, and "Undercurrents," by Ross Hills. Unfortunately, these plays had to be postponed owing to the fact that several of our members have left the district. It is hoped, however, that we shall soon be able to resume our activities. The Society is not large, as yet—numerically or financially, and for this reason, we have been unable to enter for any Festivals; but, we are looking forward to a brighter future.

Plays read include:—"Major Barbara," "Nothing but the Truth," "Letitia Meets the Family," and Shakespeare. We should welcome new members, acting or otherwise. Applications should be addressed to:—George G. Dobson, *Hon. Sec.*, 191, Coppice Road, Poynton, Ches.

PULBOROUGH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (WEST SUSSEX)

In January, 1931, our dramatic section acted an original play entitled "The Early Birds," for our Xmas Party, and again by request at a Conservative meeting at Fittleworth.

In May we acted "Old Cup o' Tay," by Mrs. Clement Salaman at our Village Carnival, and also for the W.I. Dramatic Competition in October. In this we won 97 marks out of 100, and gained three Stars. The adjudicator was Miss Eileen Thorndyke. We did the same play by request at two village entertainments.

For the Rural Community Drama Competition we presented "The Miss Dodsons that Were," by M. Macnamara—we won 80 per cent. marks and a certificate of Merit—(The adjudicator was Mr. Martin Browne), so we were chosen to play in the County finals. I attended some dramatic classes, and took part in Shakespeare Scenes on four occasions. My sister has taken the course for play-writing organised by the B.D.L. Together we spent a week at Stratford-on-Avon during the Festival, when we enjoyed seeing five Shakespeare plays.

M. F. DRURY,
Leader of Dramatic Section.

RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT WOMEN'S INSTITUTE DRAMA GROUP (NOTTS.)

We began the year working at two plays which were entered for the Nottingham Drama Festival, 1931.

(1) "The House with the Twisty Windows"—Pakington; (2) "The Prince who was a Piper"—Brighthouse.

We were chosen to appear in the final with the former play but owing to the fact that the men's parts were taken by women, we were disqualified.

We were invited to repeat the latter play in our village in June and in July at Upper Broughton.

In August we gave a play in our President's garden:—"The Open Road," by John Odams, a local playwright.

We are performing a Nativity Play—"St. Brigit of Mantle,"—Kelly, at our Xmas Party on December 15th and are working hard on the two plays which have already been entered for the Nottingham Drama Festival, 1932:—"The Bakehouse,"—Francis; "The Black Horseman,"—Pakington.

Miss Dolman has paid us two visits in connection with the R.C.C.

REEPHAM AND DISTRICT PLAYERS (NORFOLK)

We are a small society belonging to a small market town in Norfolk, the population of which is something just over 1,200. We have a splendid membership with a very keen and enthusiastic set of players and non-players. We have given two productions during the year, the first being "Eliza comes to Stay," in February, and "The Lilies of the Field," in December. Both were highly successful although the National Economy wave had its effect on our bookings at the latter performance. Another successful year is anticipated in 1932.

P. J. HILTON,
Hon. Secretary.

RILLINGTON DRAMA TEAM (YORKS)

At the Competitions in connection with the Women's Institutes held at Pickering in May, we entered in the Class for a scene from Pageant Plays, as we had been so successful with the Pageant held here in 1927, written by Miss Mary Kelly and produced by Miss Gwen Lally. The scene was one of local interest dating 1270.

It is very difficult to produce on a small stage what has been written for a scene in the wide and open spaces. However, we were highly praised for our grouping, colour-scheme and diction, and granted a second-class Certificate.

The Pageant scene was chosen because so many of the members wished to take part.

A. ADAMS.

THE PLAYERS OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL OF QUEEN ELIZABETH, RIVINGTON, LANCASHIRE

Two public performances have been given by this group during the year. On Speech Day we did "The Poetasters of Ispahan," by Clifford Bax, introducing two musical items, Lize Lehmann's "Oh, Moon of my

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Delight," and Martin Shaw's "The Palaquin Bearers" to words by Mrs. Naidu—the associate of Gandhi. There was also an Oriental Dance in the house of Ibn-Hassan. These additions did no violence to Mr. Bax's charming verse comedy, and as the acting, singing and diction were good, the performance was a great success.

Our next venture was on the occasion of the visit of the Earl of Derby to open the extensions to the School. A short Elizabethan Pageant written by Mr. Harris was performed and illustrated the three chief episodes in the early history of our foundation. Lord Derby expressed his pleasure at the performance and we had the honour of having two scenes reproduced in London and provincial papers.

A stage with curtains and lights has now been erected in the fine assembly hall of the School.

ROTHLEY (LEICS.) THE MOUNTSORREL DRAMA SOCIETY

The Mountsorrel Drama Society (or Mountsorrel Student Players, as was our original title) came into being some five years ago, as an off-shoot of a Literature Class held under the auspices of the County Adult Education Department.

The first play performed was "The Dear Departed," followed by "Crabbed Youth and Age." At the yearly R.C.C. Drama Festivals the following plays have been entered,—"The Twelve Pound Look," "Postal Orders," "Mr. Sampson," (placed second), "The Proposal," "Scissors for Luck," "Trifles," (placed second), "Spreading the News," "Belinda's Suitors," and "Things are not always", (original plays written by the Secretary, both of which received favourable criticism from the Adjudicators) "A War Committee," and the II Act of "The Critic," which production was awarded premier honours in last year's Festival.

This season we are producing "At the 'Snob Court' Hotel," "No Smoke without Fire," and a three-act play, "La Malquerida" by Benavento, one act of which is entered for the British Drama League Festival.

Each year members have attended the Literature and Drama Classes, eighteen are students at this year's Class in Modern Literature.

MABEL ASHER,
Hon. Secretary.

RUSKINGTON BRANCH. (LINCS.)

This society is only a young branch as it only came into existence in January, 1930, and became affiliated in July, 1931.

In the autumn of 1930, two of our members, Miss Dew and Mrs. Lilley, as well as our President, Mrs. Ridsdale, attended a 'One-day School' held at Carlton-Scroop.

In April, 1931, the Society entered for the Drama Competition held by the Kesteven W.I. Federation. "The Bathroom Door" was performed and although it was not successful in winning the Shield, it at least showed the possibilities of the performers.

We hope to compete again in 1932.

There are 95 members in our Institute and 18 of these belong to the Drama Section.

WINIFRED A. COCK,
Hon. Secretary.

ST. JAMES'S (WEST END) DRAMATIC SOCIETY (HANTS.)

This society has given two performances since the last report was sent in. The first was on April 17th, and consisted of L. Ge. Allen's "The Queen's Gauntlet" preceded by Hans Sachs' Shrove-tide play "Dame Truth." Both these plays showed some improvement on the previous performance. Unfortunately the weather was exceptionally bad, and the audience small in consequence.

The second performance was on December 9th, when Bentley's comedy, "The Hotel Riposo" was given, preceded by Hickman's little farce, "A Criminal Charge." The comedy was played in admirable style, the actors showing vision and insight in the rendering of their parts, and their efforts were greatly appreciated by the audience, which filled the hall to capacity.

No classes or lectures have been attempted, as all the members belong to other societies, or attend continuation classes, so that it is impossible to find a free evening.

L. FRANCES ACTON,
Hon. Producer.

THE ST. LAWRENCE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (ISLE OF WIGHT)

At the end of January, 1930, two performances were given of the "Enchanted Palace," by Arthur Somervell; the scenery, the lighting and 21 out of the 22 costumes were home made. Much help was given by the men of the village. The "Simple Sketch," by Miss Mary Kelly, was enjoyed at one of the monthly meetings and "The Murderer," by O. Prideaux, was acted at a concert and repeated at the W.I. Grand Social. The W.I. would much like to produce a 3-act play. Please will authors consent to accept percentage royalties? Our Village Hall only holds 120 seats!

WINIFRED WILKINSON,
Hon. Secretary.

SALCOMBE (DEVON)

The Salcombe Amateur Dramatic Society started this year with "Lord Richard in the Pantry," Mr. Cyril Maude being among the audience. Next Easter they will give a new farce on "Aldwich" lines by a local author. At present they are preparing for a private competition with a view to discovering fresh producers. Population at Salcombe is about two thousand and attendance at theatricals extremely good. Numbers of the society, about a dozen and a half—all acting members.

C. H. MARKHAM (CAPT.)
Chairman.

THE SHEEPSCOMBE DRAMATIC CLUB

The Sheepscombe Dramatic Club started its second season with 22 senior members and 8 juniors.

"The Rose and the Ring," was produced in February, and was a great success, in spite of very limited room for both actors and audience.

At a Garden Fete in June, 3 sketches were given, "Women will Gossip," "The Travelling Companions," and "White Magic," by the Juniors.

The members are hampered by lack of a suitable hall, a stage and money, but they are hard working and enthusiastic and determined to overcome these difficulties.

E. W. TURQUAND,
Secretary.

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THE SINGLETON PLAYERS (LANCS.)

Population about 350.

The society was started in October, 1931, with 22 members.

We produced three one-act plays in December—"Lights Out," "Only a Hoax," and "Tanks." The audience were very appreciative and the entertainment made a profit of over £5, which with £3 from donations made over £8. We gave £3 to the parochial hall where we had the entertainment and rehearsals.

The Lancashire County Council sent down two lecturers, one a general lecture on production, and one a demonstration of make-up.

The members are very keen and we intend to produce some more plays this winter. The general feeling however seems to be against producing too many definitely village plays.

We intend to use part of our funds to get some proper curtains for the stage, which are at present entirely lacking.

M. A. WATSON,
Producer.

SISSINGHURST W.I. (WEST KENT)

The earlier part of this year we were busy working up "The Taming of the Shrew" for the Lullingstone Festival. We had acted it last year at one of the monthly meetings of the W.I. Then we hired some of the costumes, but this year we made them all ourselves. We gave a public exhibition in June to help pay for the materials, and in July we took part in the Lullingstone Drama Festival. Twelve of our members attended a Drama School in the spring, held at Staplehurst, and six are now attending a short course given by Mrs. Granville Streatfield at Cranbrook, and are doing the trial scene in "The Merchant of Venice." In addition we did a few little plays at a garden W.I. meeting in August. We are now just beginning "Twelfth Night," which we hope to act next summer. Our population is just over 1,000, and our Dramatic Society numbers at present sixteen.

M. H. HUGHES,
Drama Representative.

SKENFRITH GIRL GUIDES (HEREFORDSHIRE)

In July, at a Fete held in the village to provide funds for the League of Nations, we performed one of their propaganda plays entitled "The Crowning of Peace." As there were many more parts in the play than we could take, we got various people in the village to help. The dresses were all made locally, and the play proved such a success that we performed it in the neighbouring village of Grosmont the following week.

E. HERRING.

STANBRIDGE AND TILSWORTH W.I. (BEDFORDSHIRE)

Stanbridge and Tilsworth W.I. provided seventeen players in Scene V of "The Masque of the Lady Margaret," (reported elsewhere). These included Henry VII and his Queen and Erasmus (speaking parts), the rest being Court Ladies and Gentlemen, Priests, and a Page, and Attendants, two of the latter also

playing in Scene II. Players showed commendable regularity and enthusiasm in attending the many local and two central rehearsals all involving transport, and the Principals kept in mind the necessity for specially clear enunciation out-of-doors. All clothes were made or adapted by a member who acted as Wardrobe Mistress, assisted by the Players, and the large amount of necessary dyeing, done at home. Practically everyone also sang in the Hidden Choir. "The Geese," has been played at an Old People's Tea, and at another Institute. The Institute numbers about 40 members. The Institute Producer attended a one-day Drama School at Aylesbury.

JUDITH FENWICK.

STORRINGTON BRANCH (SUSSEX)

In February last year the play "Cautious Campbell," was produced successfully but only cleared expenses. In the same month a valued member, Lily Parsons, passed away after a short illness. On May 1st, The Hon. Mary Pakington came to Storrington and at the General Meeting spoke of "Producers and Players." Work was commenced on another play in April, "The Romantic Age," and activities ceased owing to the financial stress and some of the members resigning. The members of the Women's Institute and also of the Village Drama Storrington Branch took part in the National Festival of Community Drama held at Petworth and Storrington, but failed to reach the finals. Owing to lack of time and misunderstanding other members of the Storrington Village Drama did not take part.

THE STOWTING PLAYERS (KENT)

The Stowting Players since they started in 1924, have kept to Shakespeare mainly. In 1931 they chose Gilbert Murray's translation of "The Alcestis" by Euripides. This was an entirely new venture for actors and producer alike.

The Chorus was the chief difficulty as the stage measures only 18 feet by 10. It consisted of four actors who appeared on the stage and four behind the scenes who hummed an accompaniment to the choruses described as "songs." The verse was spoken, not chanted, by only one of the acting chorus at a time for the sake of clearness. The hummed music was chosen from old chants to suit the emotion and feeling of the verse in each case.

Soon after the chorus actors came on to the stage, they came down steps at the front to the floor of the hall, and stood or sat, two on each side in front of the stage and facing it or each other, according to whom they were speaking to. This left the stage clear for the actors of the play proper. The chorus being only dimly lit were not noticed by the audience when watching the acting of the play proper on the fully lit stage. Apollo and Manatos wore half masks that covered the upper part of the face but left the mouth and chin exposed. The voice was not distorted, as it is by a full mask, and the movement of the lips and chin gave life to the face. The eyes were seen through holes cut a little larger than the eyelids of the masks, which were made of very thin papier mache, so as to be elastic and fit close to the face; that for Apollo being moulded on a cast of the Apollo Belvedere and for Manatos

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on a skull with a nose added. The photograph shows the mask on Apollo darker than the face, but to the audience there was no such difference. The effect of the masks was very good and enabled Apollo to act the man-servant and Manatos Pheres without any chance of recognition. It also differentiated the "immortals" from the humans in the play.

Three performances were given in March to full houses with success. Our experience showed that a Greek Play can be acted with success by a purely village company.

Stowting has a population of only 190.

We are now rehearsing "Henry IV," pt. 1.

B. M. JENKIN,
Producer.

SUTTON AT HONE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (KENT)

Nothing very ambitious has been attempted this year by the societies affiliated to the Council. The Women's Institute has presented several plays and the Melanesian Mission Players gave a two night entertainment consisting of a Drama in blank verse and a Detective Play, both written by a member of the Society. On this occasion we were glad to be able to obtain costumes from the V.D.S.

TADCASTER G.F.S.

Ours is a young branch of the V.D.S., not yet a year old. Last April we presented at an entertainment "Honest Folk," by Austin Hyde.

On December 14th we presented a simple Christmas Mystery Play, "The Court of the King," by Mary Debenham, which included a concealed choir of 12 voices and a remarkable painting forming a background for the final Tableau, by one of the members.

The producer attended the Drama Section of the Village Life Conference held in Leeds in November.

We hope to give a performance in April to include a modern comedy, and a scene or scenes from Shakespeare; to be decided on at our next meeting.

Tadcaster is a small town just under 4,000 population. Our members are the Drama Section of the Girl's Friendly Society—ages from 14-25. About 24 available, including "crowds."

We find the V.D.S. the greatest help and inspiration.

L. M. ISAACSON,
Hon. Secretary.

TAVISTOCK AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY

Membership 10. Population, 3,500.

The Society co-operates with the Advanced Literature classes of the Tavistock Evening Institute from which it was formed in 1923.

Productions during the year consisted of four scenes from Shakespeare's "Tempest," and a one-act comedy specially written by one of the members. During the winter session of the Institute members are assisting in rehearsals of "Much Ado About Nothing," but there will be no public presentation. The only public presentation of any play is by the invitation of other bodies as owing to our proximity to Plymouth production on other lines would result in financial

loss. It is hoped to pay a visit to our friends, the Meavy Dramatic Society, at Easter, with a Shakespearean programme.

The Society owns its own stage fittings and by loaning these to others, results in a small income being available to carry on. Work has been commenced on a cupboard of Shakespearean costumes as lack of these limit the choice of scenes that can be produced.

F. QUANT,
Hon. Secretary.

TEMPLE EWELL PLAYERS (KENT)

Our membership remains about the same,—9 men, 16 women.

Our men members have definite occupations, which make it impossible for them to get leave on any fixed date, so that as a Society we are unable to enter for competitions.

As some members wanted a change from Shakespeare, our programmes last year consisted of small plays.

On February 13th we gave "Jane," and the burlesque mime, "The Tale of a Royal Vest," the latter produced by Miss Alexander and Miss Hayhoe. On April 17th, three short plays, "The Lesson," by Dora Clement Salaman; "The King's Gift," by Francis Birrill, and "The Man on the Sofa," a detective comedy in two scenes. Two of our members attended a School of Mime and Drama at Stratford-on-Avon last summer, held by Miss Pickersgill and Mrs. E. Wood.

We are grateful to members for help given in various ways and particularly to Mr. Brand for the electric lighting of our stage—a great asset to our performances.

L. JOHNSON,
Producer.

ULEY VILLAGE PLAYERS

These players number 23; 6 women, 16 men, and one child. Population of the village, 986.

The Players have had another successful year. After their production of "Macbeth" in February (for two scenes from which they were awarded the silver star at the Cheltenham Drama Festival in March), they devoted the summer to training the young and inexperienced members of the company. For this purpose "Two Gentlemen of Verona" was selected, and three successful performances were given locally. The older players went to Cheltenham and gave two scenes translated from "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," at the Gloucestershire Arts and Crafts Festival. These scenes were given again in Uley soon afterwards. In December the Players entered for the Dramatic Verse Speaking Contest held in Dursley. In the regretted absence of Mr. Gordon Bottomley the judging was kindly undertaken by Mr. W. H. Nevin on, who gave great praise to the performance by the Uley Players of two scenes from "Coriolanus." Miss Amy Rean who had been judging the Junior Classes was also present, and was most kind and generous in her unstinted praise of the Players. These two scenes were afterwards given again in Uley.

A. PHILLIPS.

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UPWEY AND BROADWAY W.I. PLAYERS (DORSET)

The Players have not much to report this year, the reason being the absence of the producer for six months. One-act plays have been presented. "A Farewell" was given twice with much success. The second performance was at the Dorset Rural Community Drama Festival which was held in Dorchester in February.

A Team entered the D.F.W.I. Competitive Festival in May, with "The Prize Pigeon." A second-class certificate was gained. "The Dirt on the Chair" was given very successfully in November last.

C. FERGUSON,
Producer.

1ST WALTHAMSTOW GIRL GUIDES AND RANGERS (ESSEX)

Shortly after becoming affiliated to the V.D.S., the above Company produced "Cinderella," or "The Tale of a Slipper," by Stuart Munro, and Harman Hindland. The dresses were hired from the V.D.S., which were a great asset to the performance. This Company has very little time to devote to Dramatic work, as it endeavours to "keep up" its various Guide subjects. But we know that much benefit has been derived through the annual production of a "show" of some kind. Each year we aim at improving our "show"—his one (which was given three times during last April), succeeded in helping many local charities as well as giving much pleasure to all concerned in the play.

During 1932 we have great hopes of reading some V.D.S. plays and taking advantage of lectures, etc.

THE WALTON PLAYERS (SOMERSET)

During the past year, the Walton Players, a group consisting of some ten people, have produced a one-act play, "Honest Folk," three times, and an Historical scene in a Women's Institute pageant held in May, and produced in several places.

The Players gave one public performance of "Honest Folk," in their Village Hall, and also entered the play for the Somerset Rural Community Council's Competition in April. They were in the final, gaining 71 marks in the preliminary heats, and 80 marks in the final, and were awarded a certificate of merit.

Owing to the smallness of their Hall stage, they are unable to produce other than simple plays with few characters. They are now working at a one-act comedy, "Sally sees it through," which they are producing on January 21st and 22nd.

WARLINGHAM AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY (SURREY)

We have produced two plays this year; "The Cat and the Canary," and "The Middle Watch"—An extract from the Croydon Times is as follows:—

"The W.A.D.S. is one which will have to be reckoned with in any Dramatic Competition. Their production on Wednesday of the naval comedy, "The Middle Watch," was certainly in a class given recently by two of our leading London Dramatic Societies, even though they are handicapped by a minute stage. I am not suggesting that this company have not very far to go

before they reach perfection, but if they proceed at the present rate they should outstrip their rivals."

Our stage-manager has enlarged the stage—makes all the scenery and is responsible for the lighting.

We have 19 acting members and 7 non-acting, and we hope to enter the East Surrey Area Festival next year.

DOROTHY HENDERSON,
Producer.

THE ST. BONIFACE COLLEGE DRAMATIC SOCIETY WARMINSTER (WILTS.)

Our Society numbers 25 very keen members, and this year we have given six productions, four of which were public.

Our opening production was an entertainment at the Warminster Vicarage Garden Fete. Later in the year we staged a very successful Mock Trial to a large and appreciative audience. In October we prefaced a missionary talk with a performance of "The Pathfinder," an episode in the life of Livingstone.

The great event of the year was our Annual Concert. We gave two performances on November 25th of A. A. Milne's "Wurzel Flummery," and Harold Brighouse's "The Stoker," supplemented by various incidental items. At the evening performance the theatre, which seats 400, was filled, and many had to be turned away.

Our final production of the year was a private entertainment to the blind people of Warminster and district.

CECIL V. LONGDEN,
President.
W. H. TERRY,
Secretary.

THE WELFORD-ON-AVON AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY (WORCS.)

The Welford-on-Avon Amateur Dramatic Society has had a successful year. In March the members presented "The Prize Pigeon," at the Drama Festival organised by the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council in Cheltenham, and won a Gold Star Certificate.

In April two performances of Stevenson's "Admiral Guinea" were given, and the proceeds handed to the local Hospitals' Fund. In December "Merry Widow Welcome," by Edward Percy, and "Double Demon," by A. P. Herbert were given twice, the results being very satisfactory. Several new members have joined the Society this season, membership now being 18. Population of the village is about 800.

WEST BYFLEET WOMEN'S INSTITUTE DRAMA SOCIETY (SURREY)

Although fairly recently formed this society has an extremely keen membership of twenty-three.

In the spring we gave two performances of Thackeray's "The Rose and the Ring." At the beginning of June we entertained an Oxfordshire W.I. with a variety programme which included a mime of "Gentle Alice Brown," from W. S. Gilbert's Bab Ballads. Later in the summer we gave "The Gipsy Laddie," arranged by Miss Kelly, at our W.I. Group Garden

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Party. We were fortunate in having a very beautiful out-door setting for this.

In the autumn seven of us had the pleasure of playing Laurence Binyon's "Godstow Nunnery," at the Surrey W.I. County Display at Dorking, having previously won the Working Group Drama Competition with 92%. When we are not rehearsing for any special event we have classes in gesture and voice-production.

WEST HORSLEY (SURREY)

The West Horsley Dramatic Society had a very successful season both dramatically and financially. Four plays were produced; "The Dutch Doll," "The Crowd," "The Patchwork Quilt," and "The Dear Departed." They were much appreciated and enjoyed.

Our membership was over thirty and we were delighted to welcome several young members.

We finished our session in April by a visit to Godalming, to see the Pilgrim Players act "The Good Hope."

At the commencement of our new session, on October 15th, it was decided to adopt the suggestion of one of our members, this being that rehearsals should not begin until later in the season. In the meantime, members were to learn their parts at home, and at our meetings have practice and training in gesture, the expression of emotion, and general technique. The meetings proved very interesting and helpful, especially to our younger members. When rehearsals were commenced it was found that the work was easier for producer and performers, for being word perfect, they could concentrate on movements and expression.

It was decided that we should enter for the National Festival of Community Drama, the play suggested being "Eldorado."

WEST LULWORTH DRAMATIC AND DEBATING SOCIETY (DORSET)

The village of West Lulworth has a population of about 600, and the Dramatic Society a membership of about 30.

In December last we produced a short play, "On a Mantlepiece," a domestic fantasy, and two sketches; "The Family Group," by Mabel Constanduros, and "The Green Monkey," a comedy by Victor Bridges; the casts of which consisted of 27 of the members.

In May we entered for the Dorset W.I. Shakespeare Competition, in the non-Shakespeare class, with a play called "The Grand Cham's Diamond," for which we gained a first-class certificate, with 90 marks out of 100, the "Cup" winners having 92.

In September that play was again acted (by special request of the W.I. Executive), at the Dorset W.I. Canford Fete.

The Society was going to enter a play for the Dorset Drama Festival in February, but was prevented from doing so by illness.

FLORENCE ROBSON,
Producer.

WHALLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (LANCS.)

A series of play readings and discussions arranged by the Adult Education Movement was held in the spring. In March, six of our members attended a Producers' School, when Miss Macnamara gave much

good advice and suggestions which have since proved very helpful.

Scenes from "Cranford" were given in June with success. At the Drama Competition held at Preston under the L.F.W.I., Whalley entered two teams, for scenes from "As You Like It," and "Wrong Numbers," by Essex Dane. For the former the costumes were made by members of the Institute.

The membership of the Institute is 85, out of which 12 are acting members.

MARION MCVITTIE,
Hon. Secretary.

THE WHITTINGTON PLAYERS (SALOP)

We sent a team to Shrewsbury for the Shropshire Drama Festival in June. Four of our company took part in Lord Dunsany's delightful fantasy, "His Sainted Grandmother." Mr. Sladen Smith in judging, highly commended our choice of a play, and gave a very kindly criticism of the acting. In speaking privately, afterwards, to the actors, he told us he would like to have seen us produce this play in his own little theatre. We naturally felt much gratified by this mark of his approval. For our annual production in December we chose, Douglas Murray's comedy, "The Man from Toronto." This performance was a departure from the previous ones, and gave much greater scope for our artists. Though the attendance for the two nights was disappointing, the performers played up splendidly and deserved every praise in overcoming the difficulties of a small stage. Both our Stage and Business Managers are invaluable to us. The Society is very fortunate in having such an excellent producer. The membership numbers about 20, and the population of Whittington is roughly 1,000. We are preparing for this year's Drama Festival.

G. M. KENT,
Hon. Secretary.

WIMBLINGTON AND STONEA DRAMATIC SOCIETY (CAMBS.)

This Society has enjoyed a very successful season its greatest achievement being placed third at the Rural Community Council's Competition, held in the Festival Theatre, Cambridge. This success is more noteworthy as it is the Society's first attempt. The play selected was "Milestones," by Bennett and Knoblock, and the number of marks awarded was 83 out of a possible 100. The Society is again entering in 1932.

Other plays produced during the past season include "A Car Given Away," by R. A. H. Goodyear; "The Happy Man," by M. E. F. Irwin; "The Spare Room," by Leopold Montague; "The Dear Girls," by Mary Potter. A lecture on "Make-up" given by Mrs. Prior of Cambridge was greatly appreciated. A few of the members attended a series of lectures on "General Production" at Cambridge House, Cambridge.

WITHAM W.I. (ESSEX)

Witham entered for the W.I. Drama Competition, and gave three scenes from "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Lady Benson judged, and awarded the team a second place in the Shakespeare class. The

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same scenes were also repeated at a Dramatic representation of the History of the Drama from the 10th century up to Shakespeare's time, arranged by the Essex County Dramatic Society.

The population of Witham is growing and is now over the 4,000 mark.

E. LUARD.

WOODHORN AND NEWBIGGIN WOMEN'S INSTITUTE DRAMATIC SOCIETY (NORTHUMBERLAND)

Drama has played an important part in the life of the Institute during the past year. We have a membership of 30 in this section and great enthusiasm is shown, each player entering into the work with zeal and vigour.

Last year we played "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals," "Mr. Sampson," "Compromising Martha," "O Death, where is thy Sting," Scenes from "As You Like It," "Mrs. Aris," and "A Slice of Life." Our Producer, Mrs. Russell Cook has given numerous monologues in Northumbrian Dialect, written by herself.

For the second time, we gained the cup at the Newcastle Dramatic Competition, "O Death, where is thy Sting" being the play set. For the Shakespearean play we were supplied with costumes by the V.D.S., and have also had useful selections of plays sent by them. Our Society is well-known in the North, and we have given entertainments from Tyne to Cheviot. Our production of "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals," in which our producer is well-known in the rôle of Mrs. Dowry, gained a cup at the Drama Competition and has received great commendation.

Our crowning success has been "A Slice of Life," written by our producer, and awarded 90% marks at the North of England Musical and Dramatic Tournament held in the People's Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne. This has been enthusiastically received wherever played, its humour and Northumbrian dialect creating roars of laughter.

(MRS.) RUSSELL COOK,
Producer.

WOOTON COURTENAY PLAYERS (SOMERSET)

The past year has been a busy one for us; we gave "Women Will Gossip," early in March by invitation at Roadwater and took it in for the Somerset Drama Festival on March 21st. We did quite satisfactorily here for a first attempt. In August we produced the Gipsy scene in the Waifs and Strays Elizabethan Pageant at Dunster Castle, where we were praised for a natural, lively performance. On December 10th we gave a Variety Entertainment at home which included two plays, "A Way with Surly Husbands," and "The Wandering Scholar," by Hans Sachs, translated from the German. It was the first performance in England of the first mentioned play. They were much appreciated as a welcome change.

Our membership now numbers 13. Some old members have left the district but we have promising new ones to fill their place.

K. WOOD,
Hon. Secretary.

YEALAND VILLAGE PLAYERS (LANCS.)

The Yealand Village Players has outgrown its original connection with the Women's Club, and is now organised separately, its membership remaining about the same, 25 women and 10 men; total 35. The population of the three Yealand Villages is about 400.

We produced "She Stoops to Conquer," Goldsmith, at the end of January, 1931, and two weeks later repeated the performance at Carnforth in aid of the Whitehaven Pit Disaster orphans and widows, £17 being realised. This is the first time of taking a play outside Yealand. It was an unqualified success, and has given the members a feeling of confidence and enterprise. Mr. C. James, (Director of Rural Adult Education in this Area), wrote us a long and interesting letter. He lectured to us beforehand on Goldsmith and the 18th century, so we felt glad he could say our manners, costumes and setting were correct to the period of the play, well acted and produced.

In the Summer two small groups of players and others did short plays for local church efforts, one at Yealand and one at Lancaster.

This autumn season's work was undertaken in groups. The plays produced in December were W. W. Jacob's thriller, "The Monkey's Paw," F. Austin Hyde's dialect play, "The Ship Comes In," and A. A. Milne's fantasy, "The Princess and the Woodcutter." The first mentioned was the most difficult piece of work we ever tackled. Mr. James gave us two other lectures, one on the History of the Drama, and one on Shakespeare Reading.

ELIZABETH BROCKBANK,
Producer.

YAXLEY MUSICAL UNION (HUNTINGDONSHIRE)

Yaxley, (Huntingdonshire) is a village of about 2,000 inhabitants. The Musical Union was formed in 1923 and devoted all its work to Choral Music until 1926, and then with the help of Mr. F. V. Yarrow, we produced our first opera, "The Legend of St. Yvonne," and in the proceeding years until 1929 we gave "The Bandoliers," "Cupid and the Ogre," and "The Dogs of Devon."

In 1929 we formed a Dramatic Section, and with the help of The Rev. W. St. A. Bentley (the most popular dramatic producer in Peterboro' and District), we presented in April 1930, "Daddy Long Legs." This play proved a great success. In January 1931, we gave "Dr. Wake's Patient," and this January we are presenting Ian Hay's popular play "The Sport of Kings." We are also rehearsing a G. and S. Opera, "The Sorcerer," to present in April.

We have a membership of about 50 adults and during the winter we organise a Social Evening, Whist Drive and Dance once a month to keep the members fully interested, and to obtain money for Royalties, etc. We make all our scenery and give the proceeds to local charities and therefore "promote a right relation between Drama and the Life of the Community."

(Since 1926 we have given £140 to various charities. Is this a record for a village?)

KENNETH G. HAYNES,
Hon. Secretary.

RECEIPTS.			
	£	s.	d.
To Balance at Bank as at 1st January, 1931			125 0 0
" Balance in Hand as at 1st January, 1931			8
" Balance on Deposit at Bank as at 1st January, 1931			606 11 3
Affiliations—			
Branches	183	4	0
Individuals	35	14	6
Subscriptions and Donations			218 18 6
" Hire of Costumes			26 16 6
" Damage to Costumes			692 10 6
" Reading Fees			11 15 10
" Publishing—			19 0 6
Various	24	6	11
Play Lists	4	1	4
Play Lists for Young People	2	19	3
Reports	1	5	3
Advertisements			32 12 9
" Postage and Fines			25 19 2
" Summer School at Cirencester			7 18 0
" Producers' &c., Fees			102 4 5
" Acting Fees			1 1 4
" Deposit Account Interest			10 17 6
			2 19 9
	£1,884	6	8

AUDITORS' CERTIFICATE.

We, the undersigned, have examined the above Account with the books and Vouchers of the Society and find the same to be in accordance therewith. We have also verified the Cash at the Bankers.

London, E.C.,
1st December, 1931.

Gerard Van De Linde and Son,
Auditors,
Chartered Accountants.

EXPENDITURE.			
	£	s.	d.
By Rent			157 10 0
" Gas and Electricity			47 4 2
" Telephone			9 17 6
" Office Expenses			12 0 1
" Staff			136 14 5
Costume—			
Wages	481	5	3
Material	111	8	0
Hire returned	1	17	6
Carriage	69	1	1
Books			603 11 10
" Insurance			5 18 4
" Advertisements			10 14 6
" Printing and Stationery			11 8 0
" Publishing			88 14 9
" Postage			1 5 3
" Play-writing Competition Prizes			61 11 1
" Annual Meeting Expenses			4 1 3
" Travelling Expenses			5 13 8
" Subscriptions to Societies			15 11
" Removal Expenses			1 15 0
" Auditors' Fees			34 5 0
" Summer School at Cirencester—			5 15 6
Expenses	80	6	5
Half Profits handed to Gloucestershire R.C.C.	10	19	0
			91 5 5
Affiliation Fees—			
Handed to B.D.L.	31	17	1
Returned		10	6
			32 7 7
" Acting Fees			26 6 4
" Bank Charges			1 12 2
" Balances to be Transferred to Costume Cupboard—			
Cash on Current Account	100	0	0
On Deposit Account	373	18	11
			473 18 11
	£1,884	6	8

Receipts and Payments Account from 1st January 1931 to 3rd October, 1931, (and to close account).



VILLAGE DRAMA SECTION

Playwriting Competition, 1932.

WE have great pleasure in announcing the ninth playwriting competition, in which Book Prizes are offered in the three following classes:—

Class I.—Translation of a play or plays in any European language which are suitable for village production. The suitability of the play will be taken into consideration as well as the translation, and free adaptation in some cases will be necessary. Copyright must not be infringed.

Class II.—One-act play for a few characters.

(a) Comedy for village players (to play not longer than 40 minutes or less than 15 minutes.)

(b) Serious play (to play not longer than 40 minutes or less than 15 minutes) to be classified under one of these divisions:—

1. Realistic.

2. Romantic or poetic.

(c) A One-act play suitable for Women's Institutes, Girls' Clubs, etc. (to play not more than 40 minutes, nor less than 15). The play can either be for an all-woman cast, or include such male characters as can be played convincingly by women.

Class III.—A full-length play (*i.e.*, to play two hours) suitable for village production.

Class IV.—A "Thriller" for men only (to play 30-40 minutes.)

RULES.

1. An entrance fee of 2/6 must be sent with each play submitted.

2. Each competitor must adopt a nom-de-plume, and must enclose his or her real name and address (together with a stamped and addressed envelope for return of MSS.) in a sealed envelope attached to the play. On this envelope must be written both the nom-de-plume and the name of the play. Any indication of the real name of the writer renders the play liable to disqualification.

3. The plays may be written in collaboration by two or more authors, but if a prize is won by a play written thus, its value will be divided among the collaborators.

4. The judges reserve the right not to award a prize if the standard is not sufficiently high. The judges' decision will be final.

5. Plays must be *clearly typed* on one side of the paper *only*, and must be sent to Miss Scrutton, Village Drama Section, British Drama League, 8, Adelphi Terrace W.C.2., before October 31st, 1932. Envelopes must be marked Playwriting Competition. Plays must be marked with the class for which they are intended or they will be *disqualified*.

6. The Society will endeavour to return MSS., but will accept no responsibility, and it would be advisable to have two copies typed. The result will be announced as soon as possible, and no replies will be made to enquiries received while the adjudication is in progress.

7. Plays sent in must be new ones, *i.e.*, not published or already on a recommended list; though a play which has only had one purely local production is eligible. Plays already criticised by the Reading Committee are not eligible for competition.

8. The Society will recommend to their publishers the Prize-winning plays and any others likely to be of value to the villages.

N.B.—Will the competitors look very carefully at the particulars, especially as regards time. For the guidance of beginners, a page of typewriting is taken to play a little over a minute. Special attention is also drawn to Rule 1. We cannot undertake any responsibility for loose stamps and blank envelopes enclosed with MSS.

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